RAM THE VICTORIOUS

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

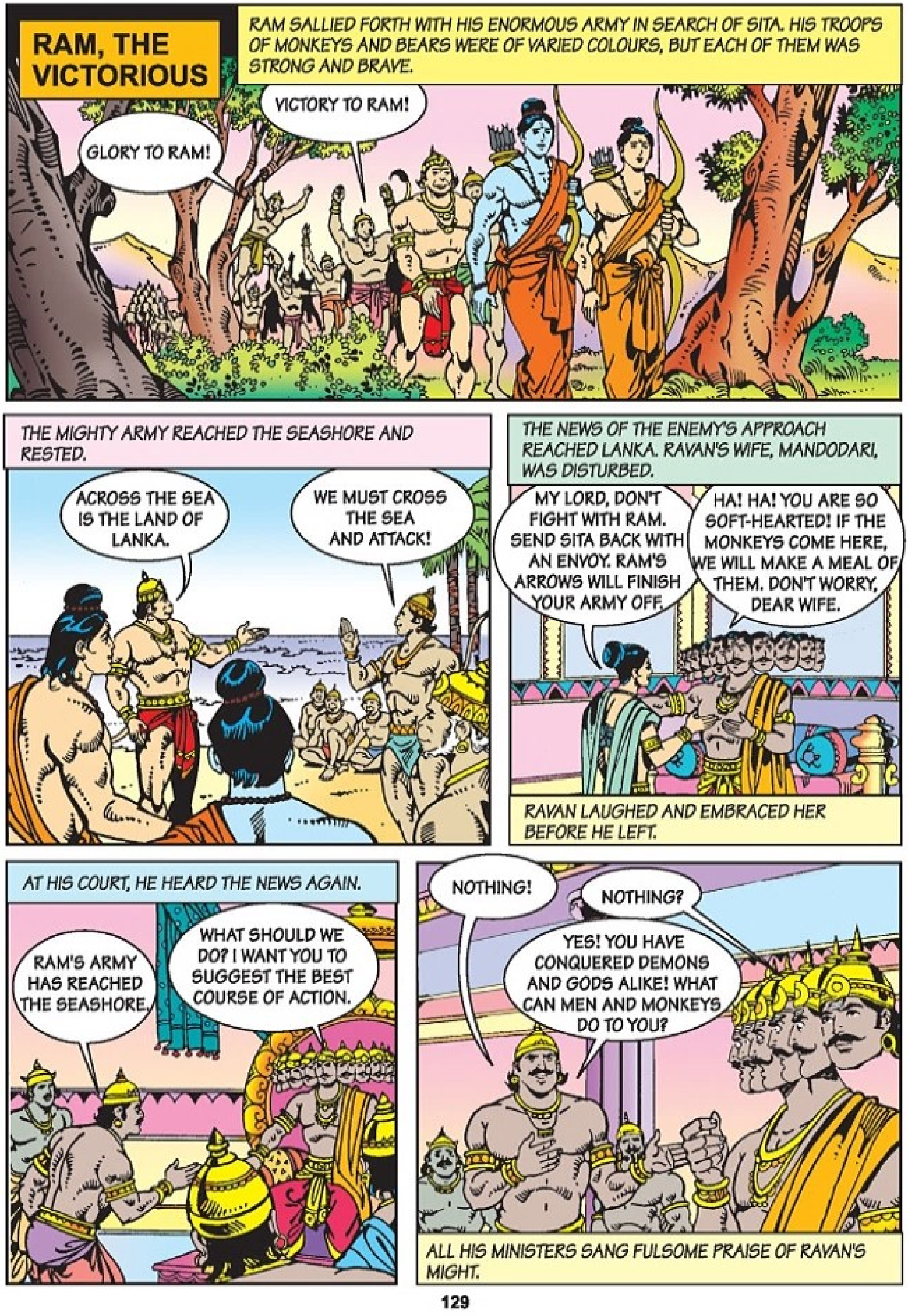
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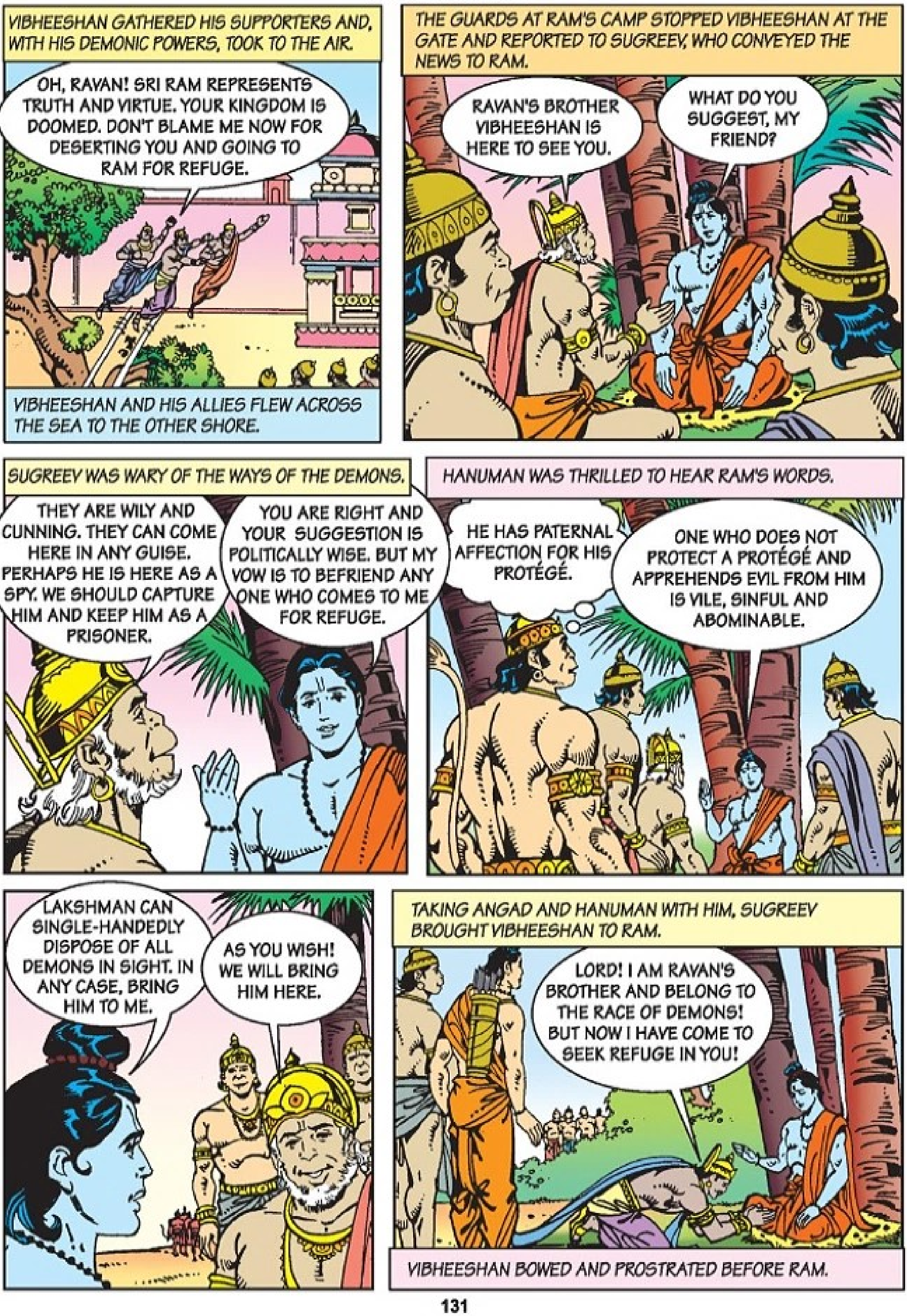
बिनु सतसंग विवेक न होई
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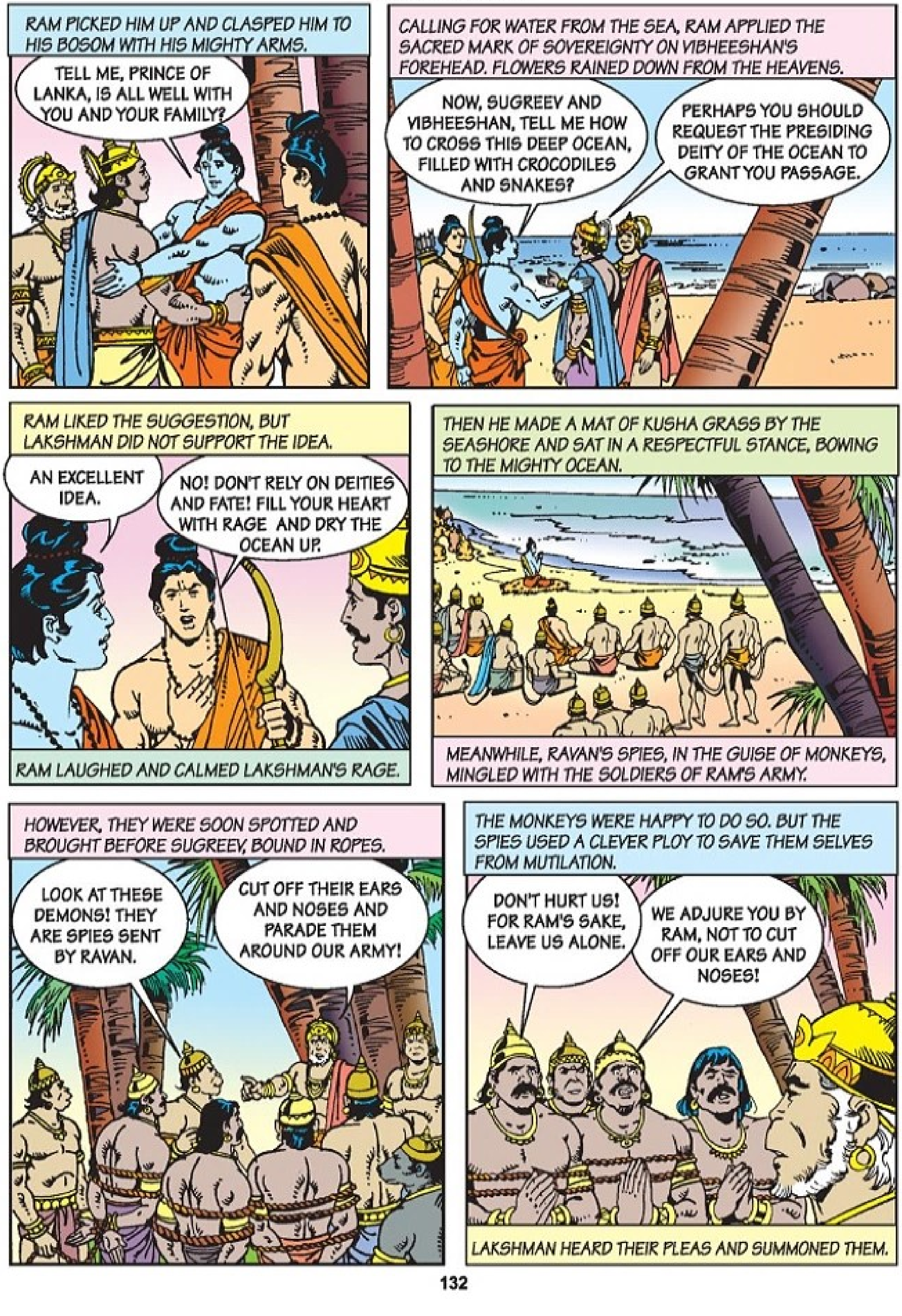
The power to discriminate cannot be attained without keeping the company of saintly people. And such company cannot be had without the grace of Shri Ram.

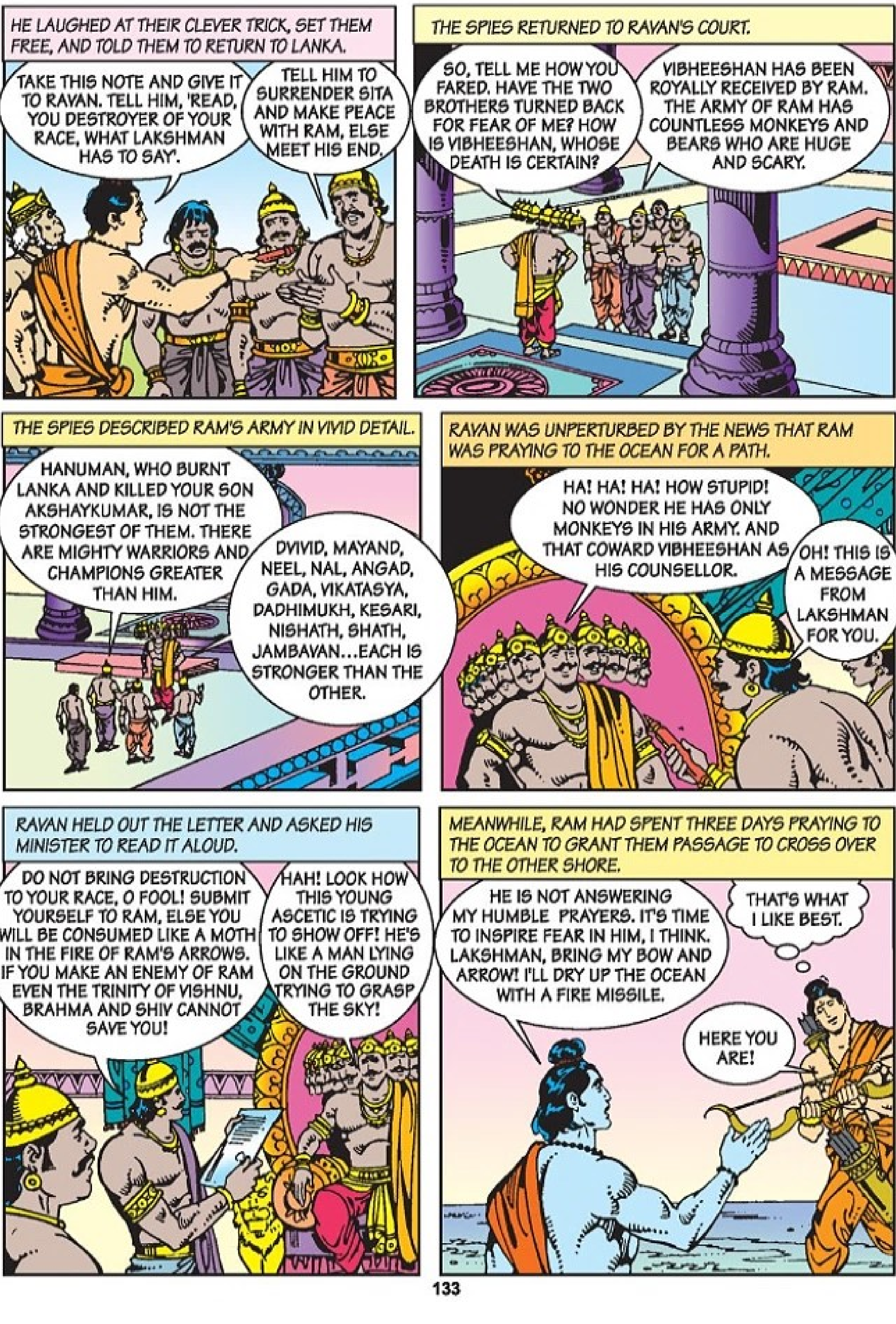



RAM, THE VICTORIOUS
RAM SALLIED FORTH WITH HIS ENORMOUS ARMY IN SEARCH OF SITA. HIS TROOPS OF MONKEYS AND BEARS WERE OF VARIED COLOURS, BUT EACH OF THEM WAS STRONG AND BRAVE.
GLORY TO RAM!
VICTORY TO RAM!
THE MIGHTY ARMY REACHED THE SEASHORE AND RESTED.
ACROSS THE SEA IS THE LAND OF LANKA.
WE MUST CROSS THE SEA AND ATTACK!
THE NEWS OF THE ENEMY'S APPROACH REACHED LANKA. RAVAN'S WIFE, MANDODARI, WAS DISTURBED.
MY LORD, DON'T FIGHT WITH RAM. SEND SITA BACK WITH AN ENVOY. RAM'S ARROWS WILL FINISH YOUR ARMY OFF.
HA! HA! YOU ARE SO SOFT-HEARTED! IF THE MONKEYS COME HERE, WE WILL MAKE A MEAL OF THEM. DON'T WORRY, DEAR WIFE.
RAVAN LAUGHED AND EMBRACED HER BEFORE HE LEFT.
AT HIS COURT, HE HEARD THE NEWS AGAIN.
RAM'S ARMY HAS REACHED THE SEASHORE.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO? I WANT YOU TO SUGGEST THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION.
NOTHING!
NOTHING?
YES! YOU HAVE CONQUERED DEMONS AND GODS ALIKE! WHAT CAN MEN AND MONKEYS DO TO YOU?
ALL HIS MINISTERS SANG FULSOME PRAISE OF RAVAN'S MIGHT.


ALL EXCEPT HIS BROTHER, VIBHEESHAN.
IF YOU DESIRE YOUR WELFARE AND GLORY, DON'T CAST YOUR EYES ON ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE.
VIBHEESHAN ENTREATED WITH RAVAN TO BE HUMBLE BEFORE THE MIGHT OF RAM.
OUR GRANDFATHER PULASTYA HAS ALSO SENT THIS MESSAGE TO YOU THROUGH HIS DISCIPLE.
YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER IS RIGHT, O KING, LISTEN TO HIM.
RAVAN WAS ENRAGED BY THIS OPPOSITION TO HIS PLANS.
YOU, MALYAVAN, AND YOU, VIBHEESHAN! DO YOU REALISE YOU ARE GLORIFYING MY ENEMY! I SHOULD GET RID OF YOU TWO!
MALYAVAN, THE OLD MINISTER, LEFT THE COURT AT ONCE. BUT VIBHEESHAN CONTINUED TO PLEAD WITH RAVAN WITH FOLDED HANDS.
USING WISE WORDS FROM SACRED SCRIPTURES LIKE THE VEDAS AND PURANAS, VIBHEESHAN GAVE RAVAN SOUND ADVICE.
I CLASP YOUR FEET, BROTHER RAVAN, AND BEG YOU TO RETURN SITA TO SRI RAM. THAT WAY, NO HARM WILL COME TO YOU.
YOU WRETCH! YOUR DEATH IS CERTAIN NOW.
RAVAN ROSE UP IN FURY AND BELLOWED AT HIS BROTHER.
YOU FOOL! HOW DARE YOU LIVE ON MY GENEROSITY AND YET SUPPORT MY ENEMY. GO AND JOIN THEM AND PREACH YOUR SERMONS TO THEM. GO!
RAVAN KICKED VIBHEESHAN WITH DISGUST.
IN HIS ATTEMPT TO ASSUAGE RAVAN'S RAGE, VIBHEESHAN TOOK THE INSULT IN HIS STRIDE AND DID NOT LOSE HIS COMPOSURE.
YOU CAN HIT ME, RAVAN, AS YOU ARE LIKE A FATHER TO ME. BUT YOUR WELFARE LIES IN RESPECTING RAM'S MIGHT.

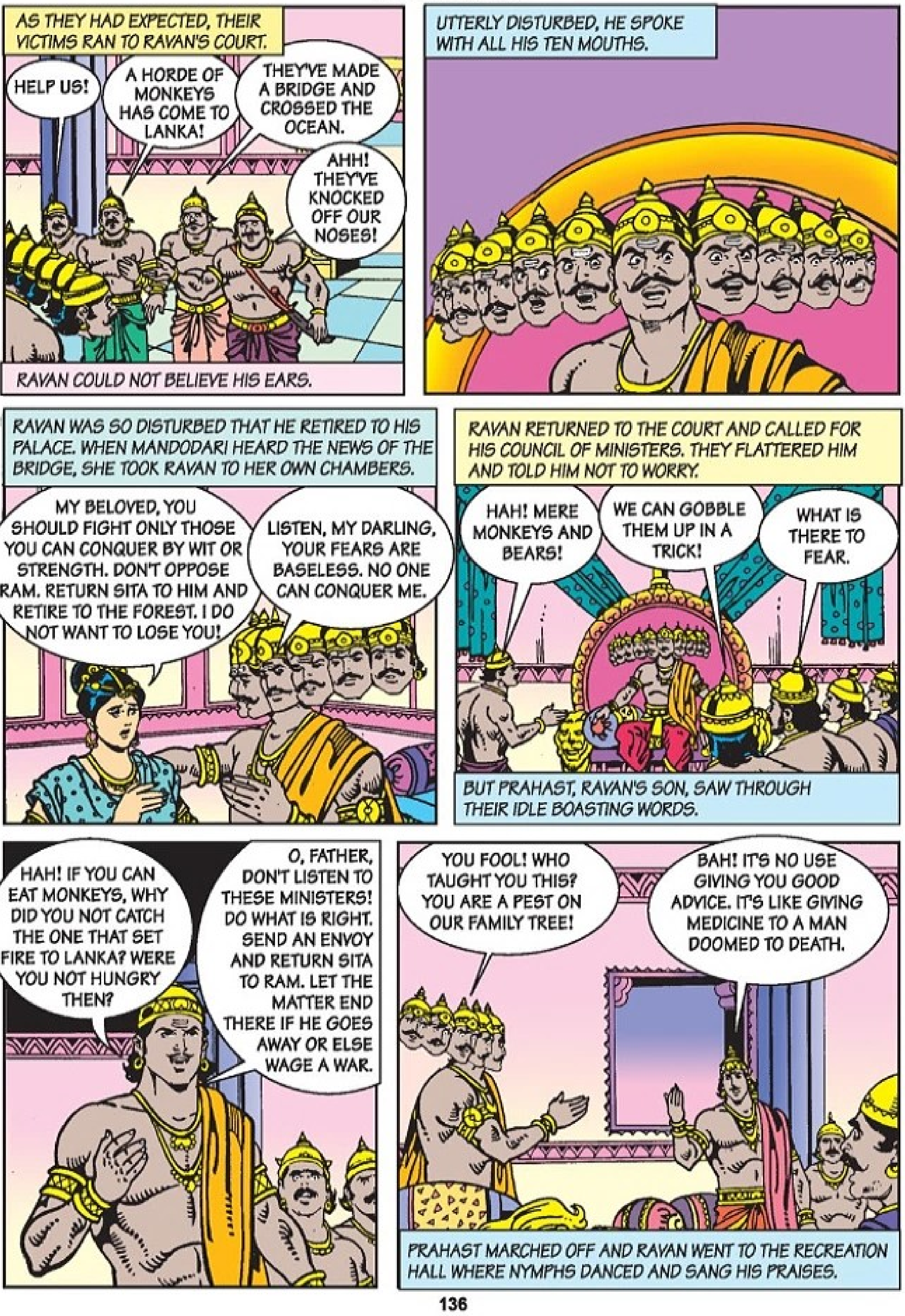

VIBHEESHAN GATHERED HIS SUPPORTERS AND, WITH HIS DEMONIC POWERS, TOOK TO THE AIR.
OH, RAVAN! SRI RAM REPRESENTS TRUTH AND VIRTUE. YOUR KINGDOM IS DOOMED. DON'T BLAME ME NOW FOR DESERTING YOU AND GOING TO RAM FOR REFUGE.
VIBHEESHAN AND HIS ALLIES FLEW ACROSS THE SEA TO THE OTHER SHORE.
THE GUARDS AT RAM'S CAMP STOPPED VIBHEESHAN AT THE GATE AND REPORTED TO SUGREEV, WHO CONVEYED THE NEWS TO RAM.
RAVAN'S BROTHER VIBHEESHAN IS HERE TO SEE YOU.
WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST, MY FRIEND?
SUGREEV WAS WARY OF THE WAYS OF THE DEMONS.
THEY ARE WILY AND CUNNING. THEY CAN COME HERE IN ANY GUISE. PERHAPS HE IS HERE AS A SPY. WE SHOULD CAPTURE HIM AND KEEP HIM AS A PRISONER.
YOU ARE RIGHT AND YOUR SUGGESTION IS POLITICALLY WISE. BUT MY VOW IS TO BEFRIEND ANY ONE WHO COMES TO ME FOR REFUGE.
HANUMAN WAS THRILLED TO HEAR RAM'S WORDS.
HE HAS PATERNAL AFFECTION FOR HIS PROTÉGÉ.
ONE WHO DOES NOT PROTECT A PROTÉGÉ AND APPREHENDS EVIL FROM HIM IS VILE, SINFUL AND ABOMINABLE.
LAKSHMAN CAN SINGLE-HANDEDLY DISPOSE OF ALL DEMONS IN SIGHT. IN ANY CASE, BRING HIM TO ME.
AS YOU WISH! WE WILL BRING HIM HERE.
TAKING ANGAD AND HANUMAN WITH HIM, SUGREEV BROUGHT VIBHEESHAN TO RAM.
LORD! I AM RAVAN'S BROTHER AND BELONG TO THE RACE OF DEMONS! BUT NOW I HAVE COME TO SEEK REFUGE IN YOU!
VIBHEESHAN BOWED AND PROSTRATED BEFORE RAM.


RAM PICKED HIM UP AND CLASPED HIM TO HIS BOSOM WITH HIS MIGHTY ARMS.
TELL ME, PRINCE OF LANKA, IS ALL WELL WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?
CALLING FOR WATER FROM THE SEA, RAM APPLIED THE SACRED MARK OF SOVEREIGNTY ON VIBHEESHAN'S FOREHEAD. FLOWERS RAINED DOWN FROM THE HEAVENS.
NOW, SUGREEV AND VIBHEESHAN, TELL ME HOW TO CROSS THIS DEEP OCEAN, FILLED WITH CROCODILES AND SNAKES?
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD REQUEST THE PRESIDING DEITY OF THE OCEAN TO GRANT YOU PASSAGE.
RAM LIKED THE SUGGESTION, BUT LAKSHMAN DID NOT SUPPORT THE IDEA.
AN EXCELLENT IDEA.
NO! DON'T RELY ON DEITIES AND FATE! FILL YOUR HEART WITH RAGE AND DRY THE OCEAN UP.
RAM LAUGHED AND CALMED LAKSHMAN'S RAGE.
THEN HE MADE A MAT OF KUSHA GRASS BY THE SEASHORE AND SAT IN A RESPECTFUL STANCE, BOWING TO THE MIGHTY OCEAN.
MEANWHILE, RAVAN'S SPIES, IN THE GUISE OF MONKEYS, MINGLED WITH THE SOLDIERS OF RAM'S ARMY.
HOWEVER, THEY WERE SOON SPOTTED AND BROUGHT BEFORE SUGREEV, BOUND IN ROPES.
LOOK AT THESE DEMONS! THEY ARE SPIES SENT BY RAVAN.
CUT OFF THEIR EARS AND NOSES AND PARADE THEM AROUND OUR ARMY!
THE MONKEYS WERE HAPPY TO DO SO. BUT THE SPIES USED A CLEVER PLOY TO SAVE THEM SELVES FROM MUTILATION.
DON'T HURT US! FOR RAM'S SAKE, LEAVE US ALONE.
WE ADJURE YOU BY RAM, NOT TO CUT OFF OUR EARS AND NOSES!
LAKSHMAN HEARD THEIR PLEAS AND SUMMONED THEM.


HE LAUGHED AT THEIR CLEVER TRICK, SET THEM FREE, AND TOLD THEM TO RETURN TO LANKA.
TAKE THIS NOTE AND GIVE IT TO RAVAN. TELL HIM, 'READ, YOU DESTROYER OF YOUR RACE, WHAT LAKSHMAN HAS TO SAY'.
TELL HIM TO SURRENDER SITA AND MAKE PEACE WITH RAM, ELSE MEET HIS END.
THE SPIES RETURNED TO RAVAN'S COURT.
SO, TELL ME HOW YOU FARED. HAVE THE TWO BROTHERS TURNED BACK FOR FEAR OF ME? HOW IS VIBHEESHAN, WHOSE DEATH IS CERTAIN?
VIBHEESHAN HAS BEEN ROYALLY RECEIVED BY RAM. THE ARMY OF RAM HAS COUNTLESS MONKEYS AND BEARS WHO ARE HUGE AND SCARY.
THE SPIES DESCRIBED RAM'S ARMY IN VIVID DETAIL.
HANUMAN, WHO BURNT LANKA AND KILLED YOUR SON AKSHAYKUMAR, IS NOT THE STRONGEST OF THEM. THERE ARE MIGHTY WARRIORS AND CHAMPIONS GREATER THAN HIM.
DVIVID, MAYAND, NEEL, NAL, ANGAD, GADA, VIKATASYA, DADHIMUKH, KESARI, NISHATH, SHATH, JAMBAVAN...EACH IS STRONGER THAN THE OTHER.
RAVAN WAS UNPERTURBED BY THE NEWS THAT RAM WAS PRAYING TO THE OCEAN FOR A PATH.
HA! HA! HA! HOW STUPID! NO WONDER HE HAS ONLY MONKEYS IN HIS ARMY. AND THAT COWARD VIBHEESHAN AS HIS COUNSELLOR.
OH! THIS IS A MESSAGE FROM LAKSHMAN FOR YOU.
RAVAN HELD OUT THE LETTER AND ASKED HIS MINISTER TO READ IT ALOUD.
DO NOT BRING DESTRUCTION TO YOUR RACE, O FOOL! SUBMIT YOURSELF TO RAM, ELSE YOU WILL BE CONSUMED LIKE A MOTH IN THE FIRE OF RAM'S ARROWS. IF YOU MAKE AN ENEMY OF RAM EVEN THE TRINITY OF VISHNU, BRAHMA AND SHIV CANNOT SAVE YOU!
HAH! LOOK HOW THIS YOUNG ASCETIC IS TRYING TO SHOW OFF! HE'S LIKE A MAN LYING ON THE GROUND TRYING TO GRASP THE SKY!
MEANWHILE, RAM HAD SPENT THREE DAYS PRAYING TO THE OCEAN TO GRANT THEM PASSAGE TO CROSS OVER TO THE OTHER SHORE.
HE IS NOT ANSWERING MY HUMBLE PRAYERS. IT'S TIME TO INSPIRE FEAR IN HIM, I THINK. LAKSHMAN, BRING MY BOW AND ARROW! I'LL DRY UP THE OCEAN WITH A FIRE MISSILE.
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE BEST.
HERE YOU ARE!

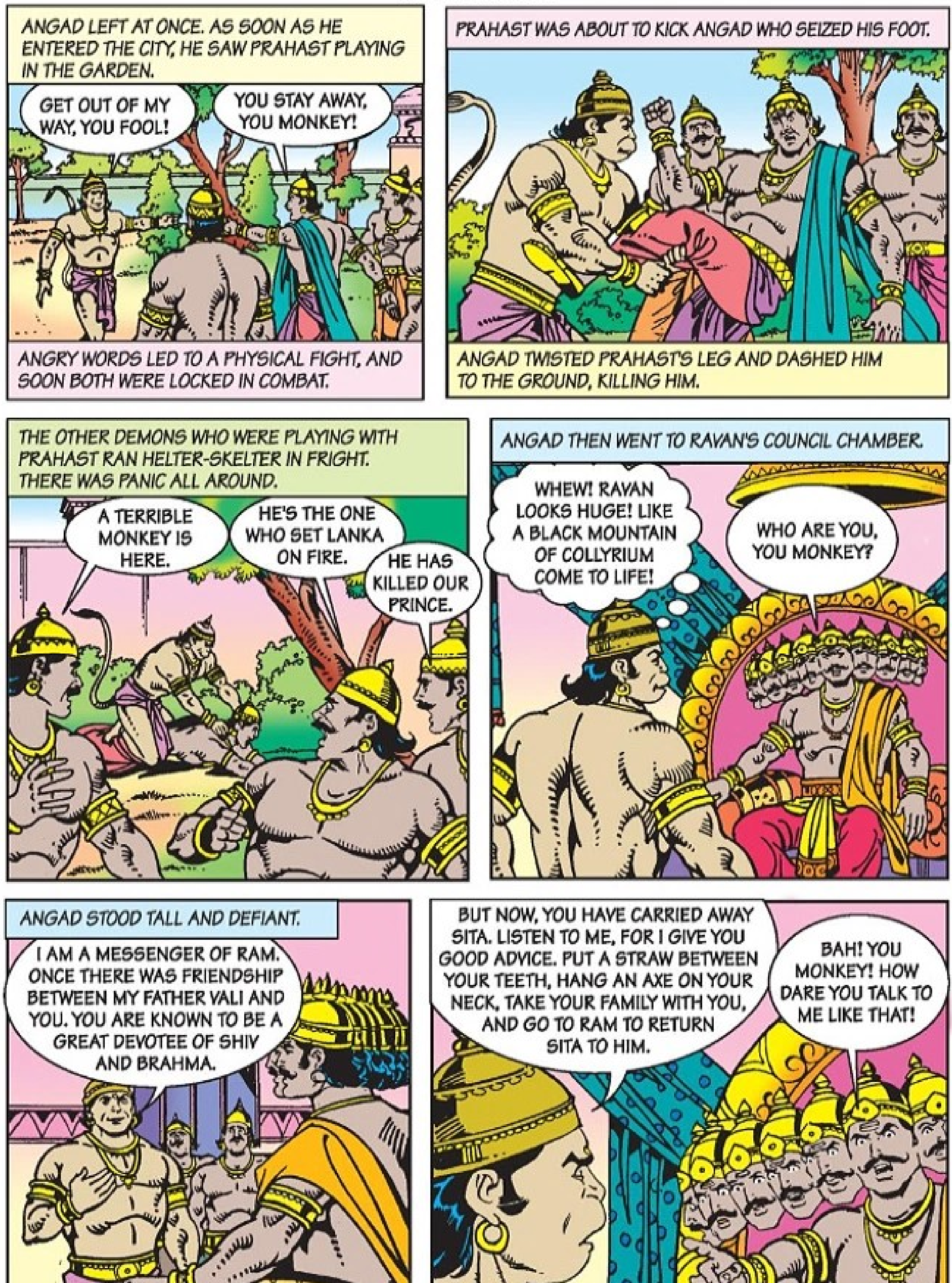

RAM FITTED THE AGNIBAN ARROW TO HIS BOW AND, AT ONCE, A BLAZING FIRE BROKE OUT IN THE OCEAN.
THE SEA CREATURES ARE ALL AFRAID!
LOOK! FIRE IN THE WATER!
JUST PLACING THE MISSILE ON THE BOW HAS WORKED WONDERS!
RAM HAD NOT FIRED THE ARROW AS YET.
THE GOD OF THE OCEAN APPEARED BEFORE RAM IN THE GUISE OF A BRAHMIN, HOLDING ALOFT A GOLDEN TRAY OF JEWELS.
FORGIVE ME! THE FIVE ELEMENTS - ETHER, WIND, FIRE, WATER AND EARTH– ARE DULL-WITTED AND SLOW TO CHANGE. I SHALL DO AS YOU PLEASE.
TELL ME A PLAN THAT WILL ALLOW MY MONKEY ARMY TO CROSS OVER AND REACH LANKA.
NAL AND NEEL ARE TWO OF YOUR MONKEYS WHO ARE BLESSED BY A BOON. EVEN THE MIGHTIEST MOUNTAIN WILL BECOME LIGHT ENOUGH TO FLOAT AS SOON AS THEY TOUCH IT. WITH THEIR HELP, HAVE A BRIDGE BUILT FOR YOUR ARMY.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ADVICE.
THE SEA LORD RETURNED TO HIS HOME, AND RAM SUMMONED HIS COUNSELLORS.
COME ON! WE MUST BUILD THE BRIDGE WITHOUT DELAY.
NAL AND NEEL, BEGIN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE.
JAMBAVAN THEN CALLED HIS TROOPS TOGETHER.
NOW, SCATTER AND SEARCH FOR BIG TREES AND ROCKS. BRING THEM ALL HERE.
HAPPY TO BE ORDERED TO DO WHAT THEY LOVED MOST, THEY SOON GATHERED A HUGE COLLECTION FOR NAL AND NEEL.
GLORY TO RAM!
HOOP!
THE BEARS AND MONKEYS LET OUT LOUD HOOTS OF JOY.


NAL AND NEEL PICKED UP THE HUGE BOULDERS AND TOSSED THEM UP LIKE BALLS.
CATCH, NAL.
GOT IT!
SO, WITH PLAYFUL ANTICS, THEY BEGAN TO LINE UP THE ROCKS AND TREES TO MAKE A BRIDGE.
RAM WAS THRILLED TO SEE THE ARDUOUS TASK SO EASILY ACCOMPLISHED.
THIS IS A GREAT PLACE! CHARMING AND GLORIOUS. I WILL SET UP AN IMAGE OF LORD SHIV AND WORSHIP HIM.
I WILL SEND MY PEOPLE TO CALL THE LEARNED SAGES FOR THE RITUAL.
WITH THE GREAT SAGES, RAM HAD A SHIVLING MADE AT THE SPOT AND WORSHIPPED IT WITH DUE CEREMONY.
NONE SO DEAR TO ME AS SHIV.
LET THIS PLACE BE KNOWN AS RAMESHWAR, THE TEMPLE OF ISHWAR SHIV MADE BY RAM.
NAL AND NEEL CHECKED THE BRIDGE THOROUGHLY AND DECLARED IT SAFE.
I THINK THE ARMY CAN CROSS OVER NOW.
HURRAH!
WHOOPEE!
HOOP HOOP!
ROARING WITH JOY, THE MULTITUDES OF MONKEYS AND BEARS CROSSED THE BRIDGE.
RAM AND LAKSHMAN WERE AMUSED TO SEE THEIR EXCITEMENT.
LOOK! THEY ARE CROWDING THE BRIDGE COMPLETELY!
HA HA! SOME OF THE MONKEYS ARE RIDING ON THE BACKS OF CROCODILES.
AFTER CROSSING THE OCEAN, THE ARMY SET UP CAMP AND LOOKED FOR FRUITS FOR FOOD.
THE BEARS AND MONKEYS ATE THEIR FILL AND THEN SEARCHED FOR SIGNS OF THE ENEMY.
THERE IS A DEMON!
CATCH HIM!
BITE OFF HIS NOSE.
KNOCK OFF HIS EARS!
THEY MADE THE DEMONS DANCE A MERRY DANCE, AND TEASED AND TORMENTED THEM BEFORE LETTING THEM GO.

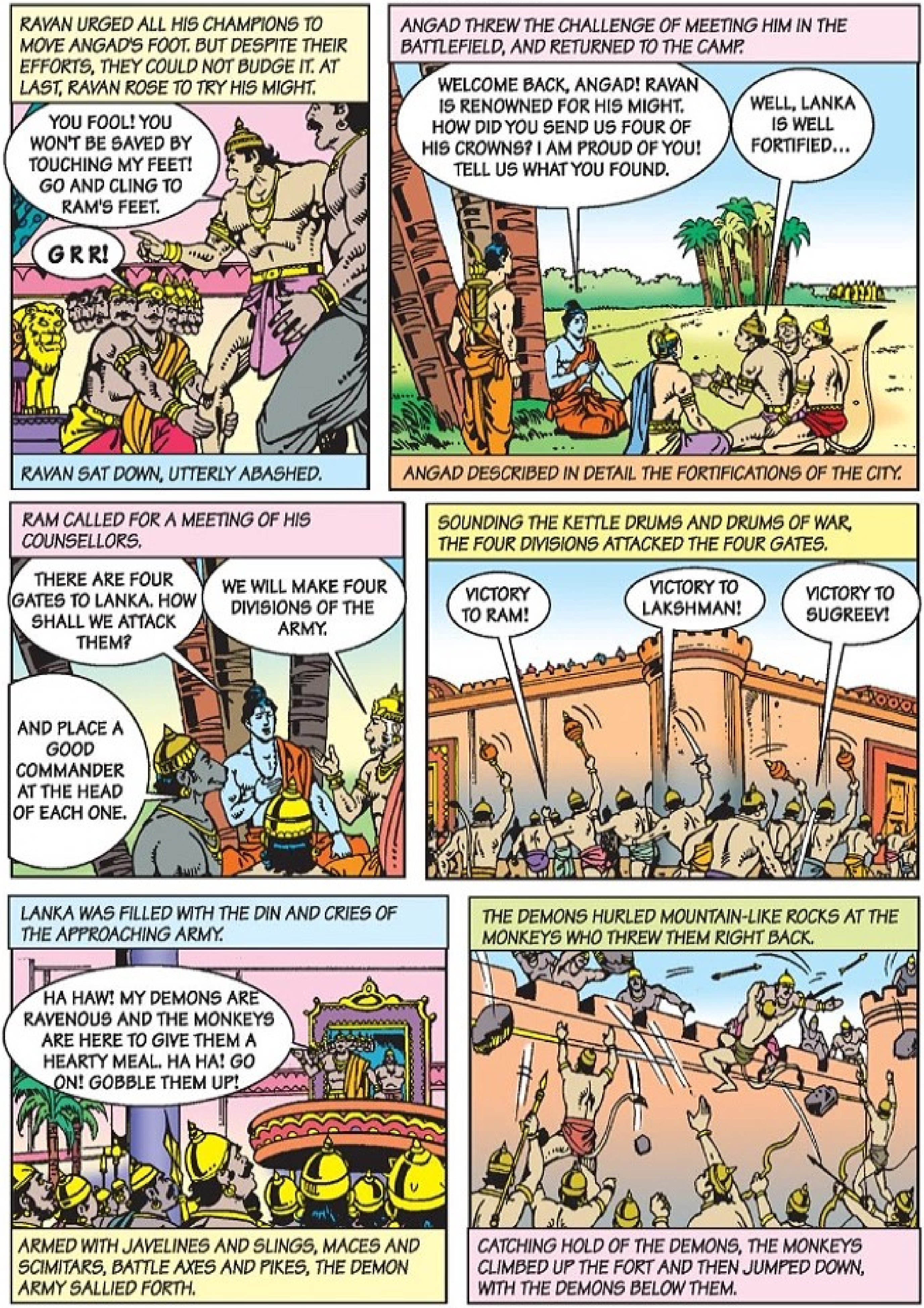


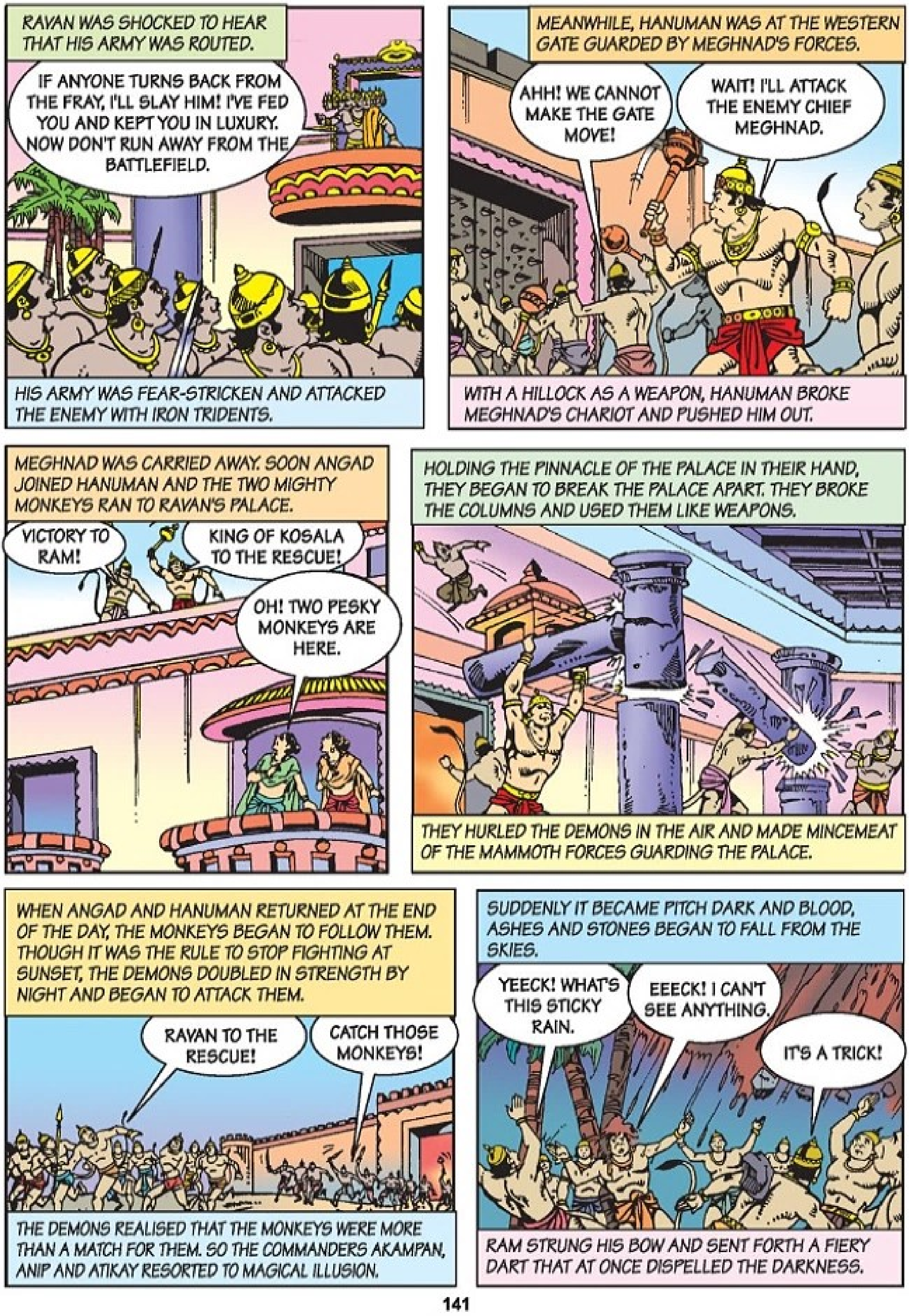
AS THEY HAD EXPECTED, THEIR VICTIMS RAN TO RAVAN'S COURT.
HELP US!
A HORDE OF MONKEYS HAS COME TO LANKA!
THEY'VE MADE A BRIDGE AND CROSSED THE OCEAN.
AHH! THEY'VE KNOCKED OFF OUR NOSES!
RAVAN COULD NOT BELIEVE HIS EARS.
UTTERLY DISTURBED, HE SPOKE WITH ALL HIS TEN MOUTHS.
RAVAN WAS SO DISTURBED THAT HE RETIRED TO HIS PALACE. WHEN MANDODARI HEARD THE NEWS OF THE BRIDGE, SHE TOOK RAVAN TO HER OWN CHAMBERS.
MY BELOVED, YOU SHOULD FIGHT ONLY THOSE YOU CAN CONQUER BY WIT OR STRENGTH. DON'T OPPOSE RAM. RETURN SITA TO HIM AND RETIRE TO THE FOREST. I DO NOT WANT TO LOSE YOU!
LISTEN, MY DARLING, YOUR FEARS ARE BASELESS. NO ONE CAN CONQUER ME.
RAVAN RETURNED TO THE COURT AND CALLED FOR HIS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. THEY FLATTERED HIM AND TOLD HIM NOT TO WORRY.
HAH! MERE MONKEYS AND BEARS!
WE CAN GOBBLE THEM UP IN A TRICK!
WHAT IS THERE TO FEAR.
BUT PRAHAST, RAVAN'S SON, SAW THROUGH THEIR IDLE BOASTING WORDS.
HAH! IF YOU CAN EAT MONKEYS, WHY DID YOU NOT CATCH THE ONE THAT SET FIRE TO LANKA? WERE YOU NOT HUNGRY THEN?
O, FATHER, DON'T LISTEN TO THESE MINISTERS! DO WHAT IS RIGHT. SEND AN ENVOY AND RETURN SITA TO RAM. LET THE MATTER END THERE IF HE GOES AWAY OR ELSE WAGE A WAR.
YOU FOOL! WHO TAUGHT YOU THIS? YOU ARE A PEST ON OUR FAMILY TREE!
BAH! IT'S NO USE GIVING YOU GOOD ADVICE. IT'S LIKE GIVING MEDICINE TO A MAN DOOMED TO DEATH.
PRAHAST MARCHED OFF AND RAVAN WENT TO THE RECREATION HALL WHERE NYMPHS DANCED AND SANG HIS PRAISES.

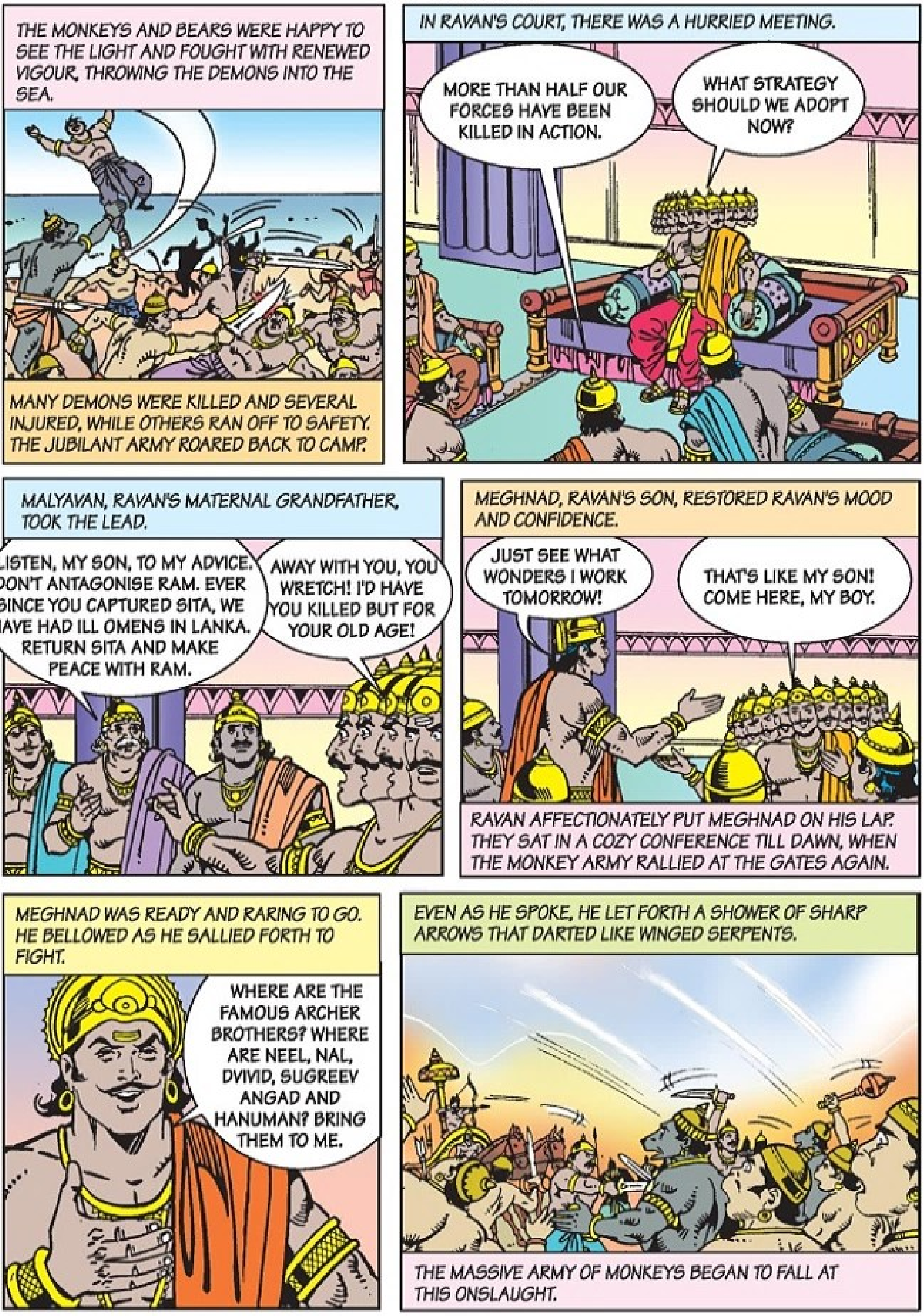

MEANWHILE, ON A HILLOCK CALLED SUBELA, LAKSHMAN MADE A SOFT BEDDING OF TENDER LEAVES AND FLOWERS. WITH HIS HEAD ON SUGREEV'S LAP, RAM LAY DOWN TO REST. ANGAD AND HANUMAN MASSAGED HIS FEET WHILE LAKSHMAN STOOD GUARD.
LOOK AT THE MOON. HOW LOVELY IT IS! YET IT HAS DARK SPOTS ON IT. TELL ME, BROTHERS, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SPOTS ARE?
I KNOW! IT IS THE SHADOW OF THE EARTH ON THE MOON.
NO! IT IS THE SPOT WHERE RAHU HIT THE MOON.
NO! IT IS THE PIECE OF MOON THAT KAMA, THE GOD OF LOVE, TOOK AWAY TO MAKE HIS CONSORT RATI'S LOVELY FACE.
RAM'S ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO THE SOUTHERN SKY.
LOOK, VIBHEESHAN! HOW LIGHTNING FLASHES THERE IN THAT CLOUD. PERHAPS IT'S A SIGNAL OF RAIN!
NO, THAT IS NOT THE LIGHTNING OF CLOUDS. THAT IS A MAGNIFICENT PALACE WHERE RAVAN IS BEING ENTERTAINED. THE CLOUD IS THE LARGE ROYAL UMBRELLA OVER RAVAN. IT IS QUEEN MANDODARI'S EARRINGS THAT FLASH LIKE LIGHTNING.
RAM SMILED AT RAVAN'S ARROGANCE AND SENT AN ARROW IN HIS DIRECTION. SUDDENLY, IN A SINGLE STROKE, RAVAN'S UMBRELLA AND CROWN CRUMBLED AND MANDODARI'S EARRINGS FELL OFF.
HAH!
WHAT HAPPENED? WAS THERE A GALE?
HOW STRANGE!
NO ONE REALISED THE CAUSE OF THE DISTURBANCE AS THE ARROW SWIFTLY RETURNED TO RAM'S QUIVER.
THE ASSEMBLY WAS SHOCKED AT THE SUDDEN DISTURBANCE, BUT RAVAN TRIED TO CALM THEM.
NO MISSILE OR MISHAP! HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN? SURELY THIS IS AN ILL OMEN!
HAH! HOW CAN THE DROPPING OF A CROWN BE UNLUCKY FOR ME, FOR WHOM EVEN THE LOSS OF HEAD IS A BOON. GO HOME AND REST.
IT'S A SIGN! MY EARRINGS CANNOT FALL FOR NO REASON.
IN THE MORNING, RAM CALLED HIS CHIEFS TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGY.
I THINK WE SHOULD SEND ANGAD AS OUR ENVOY.
I AGREE TO THAT.
YES! IT'S A GOOD IDEA.
O SON OF VALI, GO AS OUR ENVOY. SPEAK TO THE ENEMY SO THAT WE ARE HELPED AND HE'S NOT HARMED.


ANGAD LEFT AT ONCE. AS SOON AS HE ENTERED THE CITY, HE SAW PRAHAST PLAYING IN THE GARDEN.
GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU FOOL!
YOU STAY AWAY, YOU MONKEY!
ANGRY WORDS LED TO A PHYSICAL FIGHT, AND SOON BOTH WERE LOCKED IN COMBAT.
PRAHAST WAS ABOUT TO KICK ANGAD WHO SEIZED HIS FOOT.
ANGAD TWISTED PRAHAST'S LEG AND DASHED HIM TO THE GROUND, KILLING HIM.
THE OTHER DEMONS WHO WERE PLAYING WITH PRAHAST RAN HELTER-SKELTER IN FRIGHT. THERE WAS PANIC ALL AROUND.
A TERRIBLE MONKEY IS HERE.
HE'S THE ONE WHO SET LANKA ON FIRE.
HE HAS KILLED OUR PRINCE.
ANGAD THEN WENT TO RAVAN'S COUNCIL CHAMBER.
WHEW! RAVAN LOOKS HUGE! LIKE A BLACK MOUNTAIN OF COLLYRIUM COME TO LIFE!
WHO ARE YOU, YOU MONKEY?
ANGAD STOOD TALL AND DEFIANT.
I AM A MESSENGER OF RAM. ONCE THERE WAS FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN MY FATHER VALI AND YOU. YOU ARE KNOWN TO BE A GREAT DEVOTEE OF SHIV AND BRAHMA.
BUT NOW, YOU HAVE CARRIED AWAY SITA. LISTEN TO ME, FOR I GIVE YOU GOOD ADVICE. PUT A STRAW BETWEEN YOUR TEETH, HANG AN AXE ON YOUR NECK, TAKE YOUR FAMILY WITH YOU, AND GO TO RAM TO RETURN SITA TO HIM.
BAH! YOU MONKEY! HOW DARE YOU TALK TO ME LIKE THAT!


ANYWAY, THERE IS NO ONE IN YOUR ARMY CAPABLE OF FIGHTING ME. RAM IS WEAK FROM SEPARATION FROM HIS WIFE. LAKSHMAN IS SAD TOO. JAMBAVAN IS OLD. YOU AND SUGREEV ARE LIKE BRANCHES THAT CAN BE SWEPT AWAY IN A STROKE. NEEL AND NAL ARE MERE MASONS, THE ONLY MIGHTY MONKEY IS THE ONE WHO CAME HERE EARLIER.
HA! HE IS BUT A FOOT-SOLDIER OF SUGREEV'S MIGHTY ARMY.
BUT YOU ARE RIGHT! THERE IS NO ONE TO MATCH YOU IN OUR ARMY. AFTER ALL, LOVE AND WAR SHOULD BE AMONG EQUALS. HOW CAN A LION KILL FROGS? SO HOW CAN RAM GAIN GLORY BY KILLING YOU?
HAH! YOU MONKEYS! YOU DANCE TO THE TUNE OF THE ONE WHO FEEDS YOU.
BUT YOUR MASTER IS NOT WORTH YOUR LOYALTY. HE HAS NO STRENGTH, HIS FATHER EXILED HIM TO THE FOREST BECAUSE HE WAS WORTHLESS. NOW HE IS DEPRESSED OWING TO THE SEPARATION FROM HIS WIFE AND OPPRESSED BY THE FEAR OF ME. BAH!
HOW DARE YOU SAY SO!
ANGAD COULD NOT BEAR TO HEAR ILL OF RAM.
HE CLENCHED HIS JAWS AND STRUCK THE EARTH WITH HIS MIGHTY ARMS. THE MINISTERS WERE THROWN OFF THEIR SEATS. RAVAN TOTTERED ON HIS THRONE. HIS CROWN FELL OFF.
ANGAD PICKED UP FOUR OR FIVE CROWNS AND HURLED THEM TOWARDS HIS CAMP.
WHEN THEY FELL AT RAM'S FEET, THE MONKEYS WERE SCARED.
OHH! SHOOTING STARS IN DAY-TIME!
NO! IT'S A THUNDERBOLT!
HA HA! DON'T FEAR! THESE ARE NOT THUNDERBOLTS. THEY ARE CROWNS OF RAVAN THROWN BY ANGAD.
WHILE THERE WAS JOY IN RAM'S CAMP...
...RAVAN WAS BLAZING WITH ANGER. HE ORDERED HIS SOLDIERS--
SEIZE HIM! SLAY HIM! KILL AND EAT ANY MONKEY OR BEAR YOU FIND! BRING THE TWO BROTHERS TO ME ALIVE!
HAH! HERE, I PLACE MY FOOT IN YOUR COURT, AND I DARE YOU TO MOVE IT. IF YOU CAN MOVE IT, WE WILL DECLARE YOU THE VICTOR. COME ON!
ANGAD PLACED HIS FOOT FIRMLY IN THE MIDST OF THE COURT.

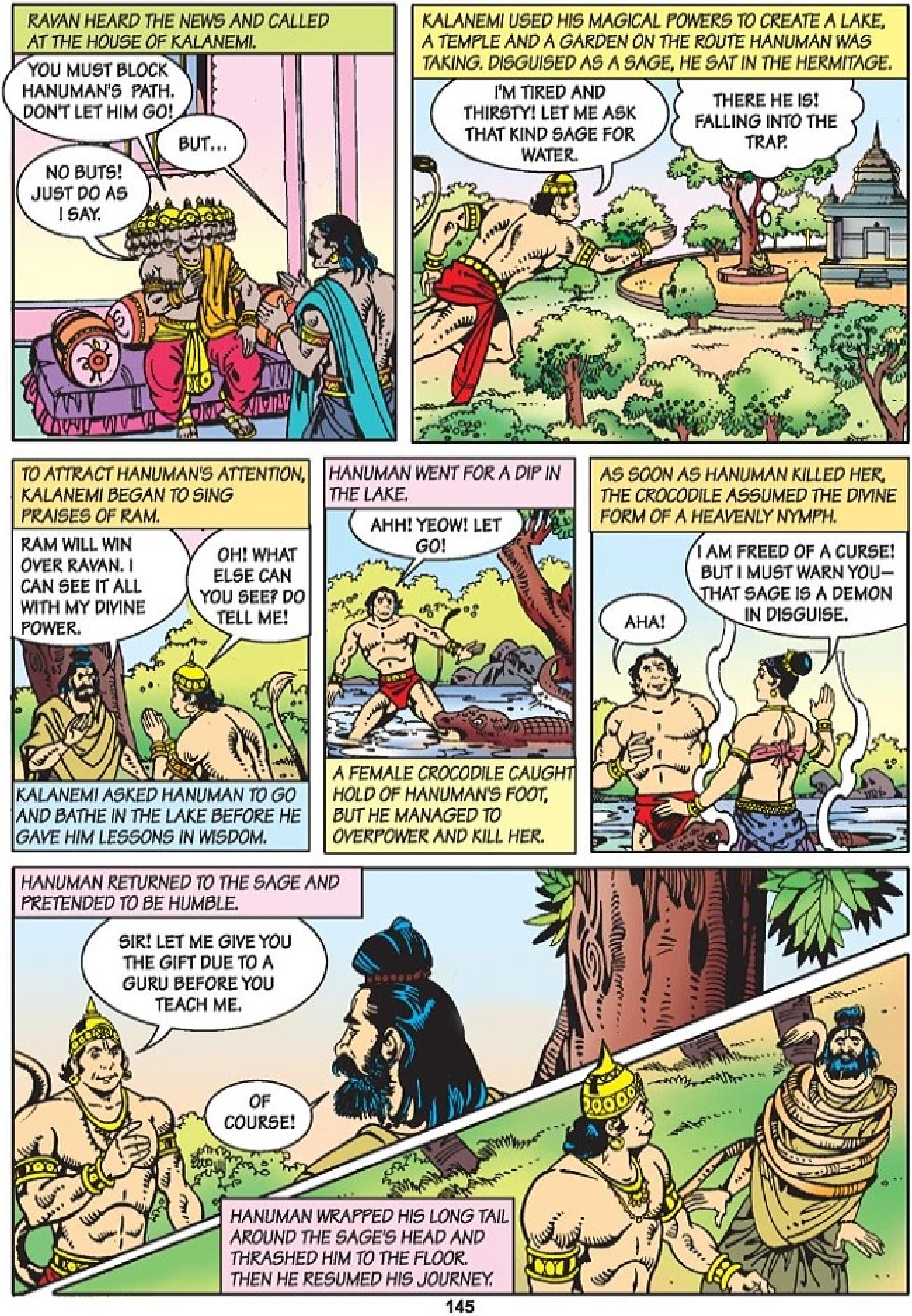

RAVAN URGED ALL HIS CHAMPIONS TO MOVE ANGAD'S FOOT. BUT DESPITE THEIR EFFORTS, THEY COULD NOT BUDGE IT. AT LAST, RAVAN ROSE TO TRY HIS MIGHT.
YOU FOOL! YOU WON'T BE SAVED BY TOUCHING MY FEET! GO AND CLING TO RAM'S FEET.
GRR!
RAVAN SAT DOWN, UTTERLY ABASHED.
ANGAD THREW THE CHALLENGE OF MEETING HIM IN THE BATTLEFIELD, AND RETURNED TO THE CAMP.
WELCOME BACK, ANGAD! RAVAN IS RENOWNED FOR HIS MIGHT. HOW DID YOU SEND US FOUR OF HIS CROWNS? I AM PROUD OF YOU! TELL US WHAT YOU FOUND.
WELL, LANKA IS WELL FORTIFIED...
ANGAD DESCRIBED IN DETAIL THE FORTIFICATIONS OF THE CITY.
RAM CALLED FOR A MEETING OF HIS COUNSELLORS.
THERE ARE FOUR GATES TO LANKA. HOW SHALL WE ATTACK THEM?
WE WILL MAKE FOUR DIVISIONS OF THE ARMY.
AND PLACE A GOOD COMMANDER AT THE HEAD OF EACH ONE.
SOUNDING THE KETTLE DRUMS AND DRUMS OF WAR, THE FOUR DIVISIONS ATTACKED THE FOUR GATES.
VICTORY TO RAM!
VICTORY TO LAKSHMAN!
VICTORY TO SUGREEV!
LANKA WAS FILLED WITH THE DIN AND CRIES OF THE APPROACHING ARMY.
HA HAW! MY DEMONS ARE RAVENOUS AND THE MONKEYS ARE HERE TO GIVE THEM A HEARTY MEAL. HA HA! GO ON! GOBBLE THEM UP!
ARMED WITH JAVELINES AND SLINGS, MACES AND SCIMITARS, BATTLE AXES AND PIKES, THE DEMON ARMY SALLIED FORTH.
THE DEMONS HURLED MOUNTAIN-LIKE ROCKS AT THE MONKEYS WHO THREW THEM RIGHT BACK.
CATCHING HOLD OF THE DEMONS, THE MONKEYS CLIMBED UP THE FORT AND THEN JUMPED DOWN, WITH THE DEMONS BELOW THEM.

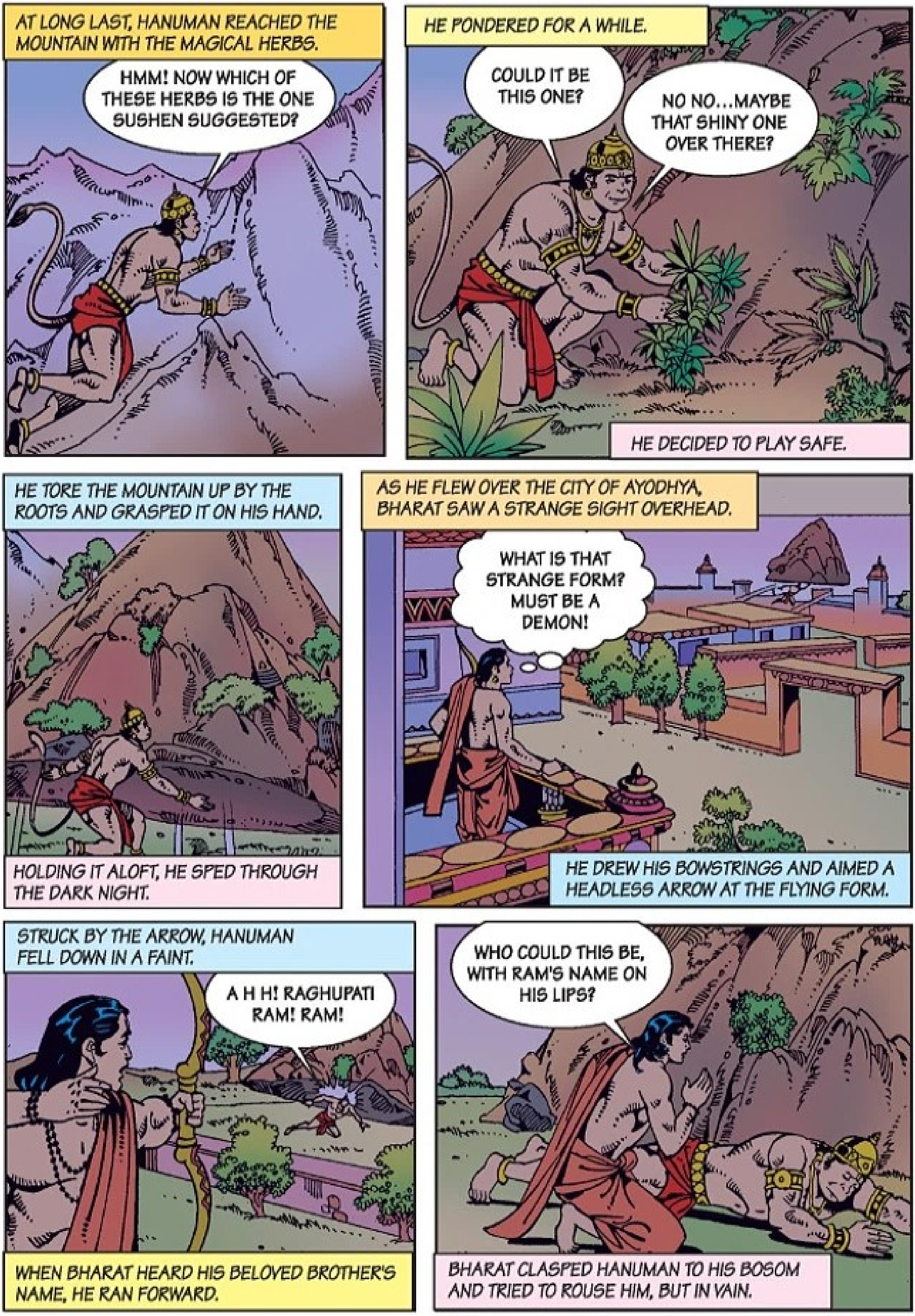

RAVAN WAS SHOCKED TO HEAR THAT HIS ARMY WAS ROUTED.
IF ANYONE TURNS BACK FROM THE FRAY, I'LL SLAY HIM! I'VE FED YOU AND KEPT YOU IN LUXURY. NOW DON'T RUN AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.
HIS ARMY WAS FEAR-STRICKEN AND ATTACKED THE ENEMY WITH IRON TRIDENTS.
MEANWHILE, HANUMAN WAS AT THE WESTERN GATE GUARDED BY MEGHNAD'S FORCES.
AHH! WE CANNOT MAKE THE GATE MOVE!
WAIT! I'LL ATTACK THE ENEMY CHIEF MEGHNAD.
WITH A HILLOCK AS A WEAPON, HANUMAN BROKE MEGHNAD'S CHARIOT AND PUSHED HIM OUT.
MEGHNAD WAS CARRIED AWAY. SOON ANGAD JOINED HANUMAN AND THE TWO MIGHTY MONKEYS RAN TO RAVAN'S PALACE.
VICTORY TO RAM!
KING OF KOSALA TO THE RESCUE!
OH! TWO PESKY MONKEYS ARE HERE.
HOLDING THE PINNACLE OF THE PALACE IN THEIR HAND, THEY BEGAN TO BREAK THE PALACE APART. THEY BROKE THE COLUMNS AND USED THEM LIKE WEAPONS.
THEY HURLED THE DEMONS IN THE AIR AND MADE MINCEMEAT OF THE MAMMOTH FORCES GUARDING THE PALACE.
WHEN ANGAD AND HANUMAN RETURNED AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE MONKEYS BEGAN TO FOLLOW THEM. THOUGH IT WAS THE RULE TO STOP FIGHTING AT SUNSET, THE DEMONS DOUBLED IN STRENGTH BY NIGHT AND BEGAN TO ATTACK THEM.
RAVAN TO THE RESCUE!
CATCH THOSE MONKEYS!
THE DEMONS REALISED THAT THE MONKEYS WERE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THEM. SO THE COMMANDERS AKAMPAN, ANIP AND ATIKAY RESORTED TO MAGICAL ILLUSION.
SUDDENLY IT BECAME PITCH DARK AND BLOOD, ASHES AND STONES BEGAN TO FALL FROM THE SKIES.
YEECK! WHAT'S THIS STICKY RAIN.
EEECK! I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING.
IT'S A TRICK!
RAM STRUNG HIS BOW AND SENT FORTH A FIERY DART THAT AT ONCE DISPELLED THE DARKNESS.

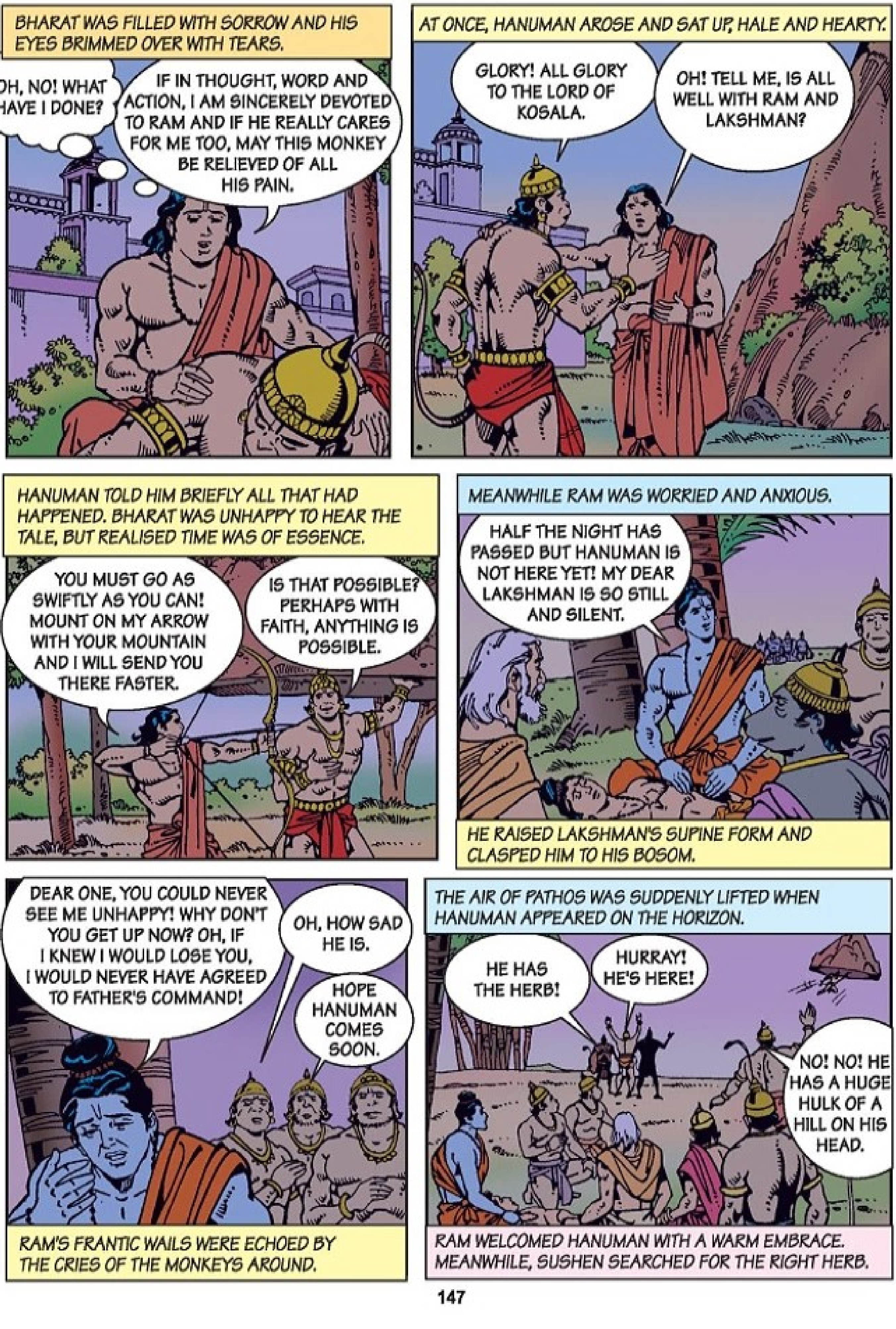

THE MONKEYS AND BEARS WERE HAPPY TO SEE THE LIGHT AND FOUGHT WITH RENEWED VIGOUR, THROWING THE DEMONS INTO THE SEA.
MANY DEMONS WERE KILLED AND SEVERAL INJURED, WHILE OTHERS RAN OFF TO SAFETY. THE JUBILANT ARMY ROARED BACK TO CAMP.
IN RAVAN'S COURT, THERE WAS A HURRIED MEETING.
MORE THAN HALF OUR FORCES HAVE BEEN KILLED IN ACTION.
WHAT STRATEGY SHOULD WE ADOPT NOW?
MALYAVAN, RAVAN'S MATERNAL GRANDFATHER, TOOK THE LEAD.
LISTEN, MY SON, TO MY ADVICE. DON'T ANTAGONISE RAM. EVER SINCE YOU CAPTURED SITA, WE HAVE HAD ILL OMENS IN LANKA. RETURN SITA AND MAKE PEACE WITH RAM.
AWAY WITH YOU, YOU WRETCH! I'D HAVE YOU KILLED BUT FOR YOUR OLD AGE!
MEGHNAD, RAVAN'S SON, RESTORED RAVAN'S MOOD AND CONFIDENCE.
JUST SEE WHAT WONDERS I WORK TOMORROW!
THAT'S LIKE MY SON! COME HERE, MY BOY.
RAVAN AFFECTIONATELY PUT MEGHNAD ON HIS LAP. THEY SAT IN A COZY CONFERENCE TILL DAWN, WHEN THE MONKEY ARMY RALLIED AT THE GATES AGAIN.
MEGHNAD WAS READY AND RARING TO GO. HE BELLOWED AS HE SALLIED FORTH TO FIGHT.
WHERE ARE THE FAMOUS ARCHER BROTHERS? WHERE ARE NEEL, NAL, DVIVID, SUGREEV ANGAD AND HANUMAN? BRING THEM TO ME.
EVEN AS HE SPOKE, HE LET FORTH A SHOWER OF SHARP ARROWS THAT DARTED LIKE WINGED SERPENTS.
THE MASSIVE ARMY OF MONKEYS BEGAN TO FALL AT THIS ONSLAUGHT.


THERE WAS CONFUSION AND FEAR IN THE BATTLEFIELD.
RUN! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!
FORGET THE FIGHT! SAVE YOUR LIFE.
TRUE TO HIS NAME, MEGHNAD ROARED LIKE A THUNDERCLOUD.
HANUMAN SAW THAT THEIR ARMY WAS BEING DECIMATED. HE PICKED UP A HUGE HILLOCK AND THREW IT AT MEGHNAD.
BUT MEGHNAD SAW IT COMING AND, IN THE NICK OF TIME, TOOK TO THE AIR. HIS CHARIOT AND HORSES WERE CRUSHED.
MEGHNAD FLEW TOWARDS RAM AND HURLED A VOLLEY OF ABUSES AT HIM ALONG WITH A SHOWER OF WEAPONS.
BUT RAM SNAPPED THE WEAPONS AND IGNORED THE INSULTS WITH CALM.
NOW LAKSHMAN RUSHED FORTH, BOW AND ARROW IN HAND. WHILE THE MONKEY ARMY GRAPPLED WITH THE DEMON FORCES IN A DEADLY COMBAT…
SEIZE HIM.
KILL HIM.
CUT OFF HIS LIMBS.
SLAY HIM.
…LAKSHMAN AND MEGHNAD WERE ENGAGED IN CONFLICT. SOON LAKSHMAN DESTROYED MEGHNAD'S CHARIOT AND CHARIOTEER.
HE WILL KILL ME NOW! I MUST ATTACK QUICKLY.
HE THREW HIS DEADLY JAVELIN AT LAKSHMAN AND IT STRUCK HIM ON HIS BREAST.
LAKSHMAN FELL DOWN IN A SWOON. MEANWHILE, AS THE SUN WAS SETTING, THE ARMIES BEGAN TO RETIRE.
GET BACK TO CAMP! RALLY YOUR SOLDIERS. BUT WHERE IS LAKSHMAN?
HERE HE IS. HE FAINTED IN THE FIELD.
RAM WAS DISTURBED TO SEE HIS BELOVED BROTHER IN A FAINT.

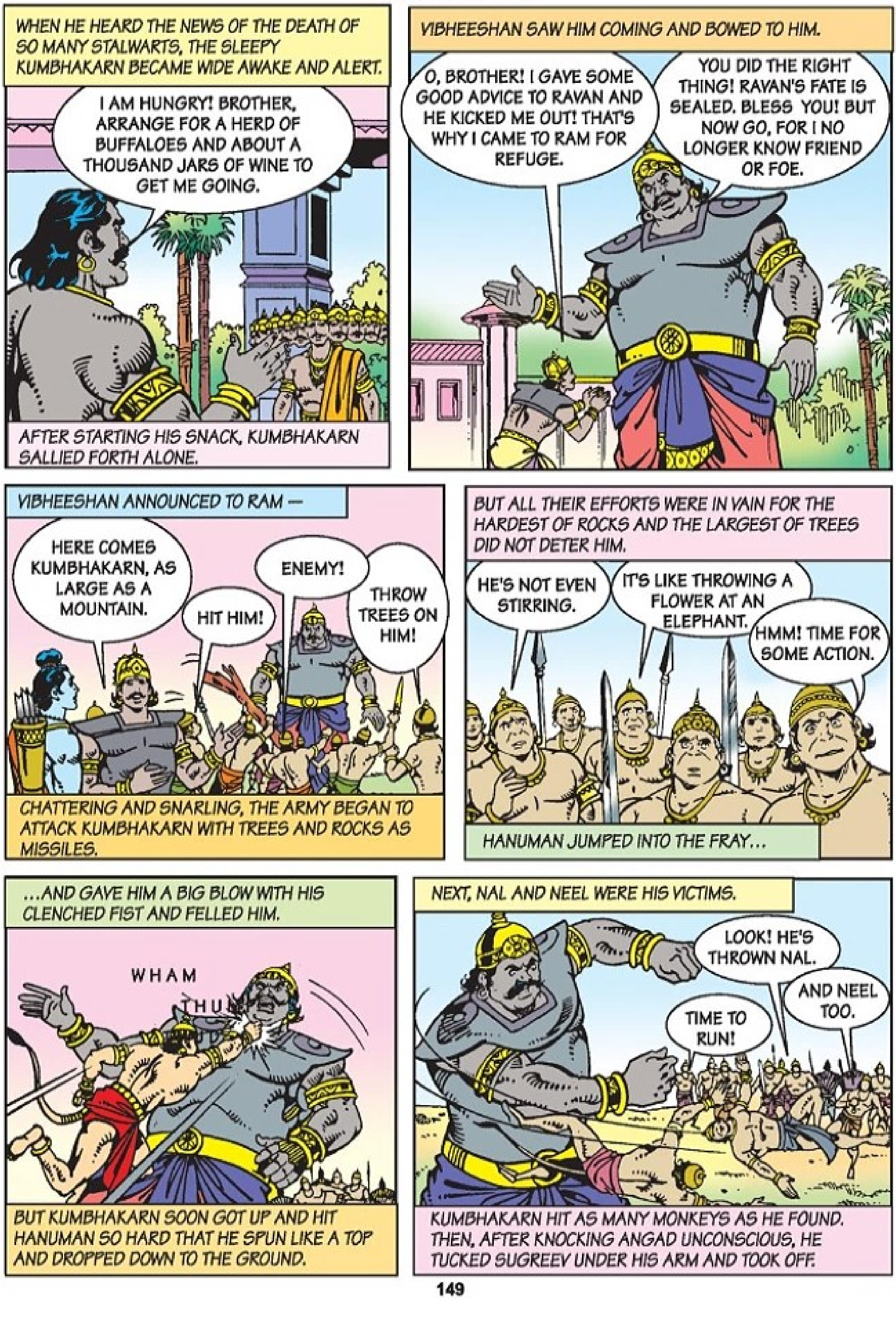

ALL THE MINISTERS GATHERED AROUND THE STILL FORM OF LAKSHMAN.
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
SUSHEN, THE PHYSICIAN, LIVES IN LANKA. SOMEONE SHOULD FETCH HIM.
I'LL GO!
HANUMAN ASSUMED HIS TINY MOSQUITO SIZE AND ENTERED THE CITY.
HE FOUND SUSHEN'S HOUSE EASILY.
THERE HE IS! HE MAY NOT AGREE TO COME WITH ME.
HANUMAN ASSUMED HIS LARGE FORM AND PICKED UP THE ENTIRE HOUSE OF THE PHYSICIAN.
HEY! WH...WHERE ARE WE GOING? WHO ARE YOU?
GENTLY, HANUMAN PLACED THE HOUSE DOWN AND LED SUSHEN TO LAKSHMAN.
SUSHEN EXAMINED LAKSHMAN CAREFULLY.
HMM! HE CAN BE TREATED WITH A SPECIAL HERB.
WILL HE BE ALL RIGHT? CAN YOU REVIVE HIM?
ALL YOUR HERBS ARE HERE. THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT YOUR WHOLE HOUSE HERE.
NO! THIS IS NOT AN ORDINARY CASE OF FAINTING. THERE IS ONLY ONE HERB THAT CAN CURE IT AND IT GROWS ON A MOUNTAIN IN THE HIMALAYAS.
TELL ME WHAT IT IS, AND I'LL FETCH IT.
SUSHEN TOLD HIM THE NAME OF THE MOUNTAIN AND THE HERB.
HANUMAN WAS PREPARED TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY, BUT HIS PLAN WAS OVERHEARD.
I'LL FLY TO THE HIMALAYAN RANGE AND GET THE HEALING HERB AT ONCE.
HMM! I MUST REPORT THIS TO RAVAN.
THE SPY FROM RAVAN'S CAMP AT ONCE GAVE THE NEWS TO HIS MASTER.


RAVAN HEARD THE NEWS AND CALLED AT THE HOUSE OF KALANEMI.
YOU MUST BLOCK HANUMAN'S PATH. DON'T LET HIM GO!
BUT...
NO BUTS! JUST DO AS I SAY.
KALANEMI USED HIS MAGICAL POWERS TO CREATE A LAKE, A TEMPLE AND A GARDEN ON THE ROUTE HANUMAN WAS TAKING. DISGUISED AS A SAGE, HE SAT IN THE HERMITAGE.
I'M TIRED AND THIRSTY! LET ME ASK THAT KIND SAGE FOR WATER.
THERE HE IS! FALLING INTO THE TRAP.
TO ATTRACT HANUMAN'S ATTENTION, KALANEMI BEGAN TO SING PRAISES OF RAM.
RAM WILL WIN OVER RAVAN. I CAN SEE IT ALL WITH MY DIVINE POWER.
OH! WHAT ELSE CAN YOU SEE? DO TELL ME!
KALANEMI ASKED HANUMAN TO GO AND BATHE IN THE LAKE BEFORE HE GAVE HIM LESSONS IN WISDOM.
HANUMAN WENT FOR A DIP IN THE LAKE.
AHH! YEOW! LET GO!
A FEMALE CROCODILE CAUGHT HOLD OF HANUMAN'S FOOT, BUT HE MANAGED TO OVERPOWER AND KILL HER.
AS SOON AS HANUMAN KILLED HER, THE CROCODILE ASSUMED THE DIVINE FORM OF A HEAVENLY NYMPH.
AHA!
I AM FREED OF A CURSE! BUT I MUST WARN YOU—THAT SAGE IS A DEMON IN DISGUISE.
HANUMAN RETURNED TO THE SAGE AND PRETENDED TO BE HUMBLE.
SIR! LET ME GIVE YOU THE GIFT DUE TO A GURU BEFORE YOU TEACH ME.
OF COURSE!
HANUMAN WRAPPED HIS LONG TAIL AROUND THE SAGE'S HEAD AND THRASHED HIM TO THE FLOOR. THEN HE RESUMED HIS JOURNEY.


AT LONG LAST, HANUMAN REACHED THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE MAGICAL HERBS.
HMM! NOW WHICH OF THESE HERBS IS THE ONE SUSHEN SUGGESTED?
HE PONDERED FOR A WHILE.
COULD IT BE THIS ONE?
NO NO...MAYBE THAT SHINY ONE OVER THERE?
HE DECIDED TO PLAY SAFE.
HE TORE THE MOUNTAIN UP BY THE ROOTS AND GRASPED IT ON HIS HAND.
HOLDING IT ALOFT, HE SPED THROUGH THE DARK NIGHT.
AS HE FLEW OVER THE CITY OF AYODHYA, BHARAT SAW A STRANGE SIGHT OVERHEAD.
WHAT IS THAT STRANGE FORM? MUST BE A DEMON!
HE DREW HIS BOWSTRINGS AND AIMED A HEADLESS ARROW AT THE FLYING FORM.
STRUCK BY THE ARROW, HANUMAN FELL DOWN IN A FAINT.
A H H! RAGHUPATI RAM! RAM!
WHEN BHARAT HEARD HIS BELOVED BROTHER'S NAME, HE RAN FORWARD.
WHO COULD THIS BE, WITH RAM'S NAME ON HIS LIPS?
BHARAT CLASPED HANUMAN TO HIS BOSOM AND TRIED TO ROUSE HIM, BUT IN VAIN.

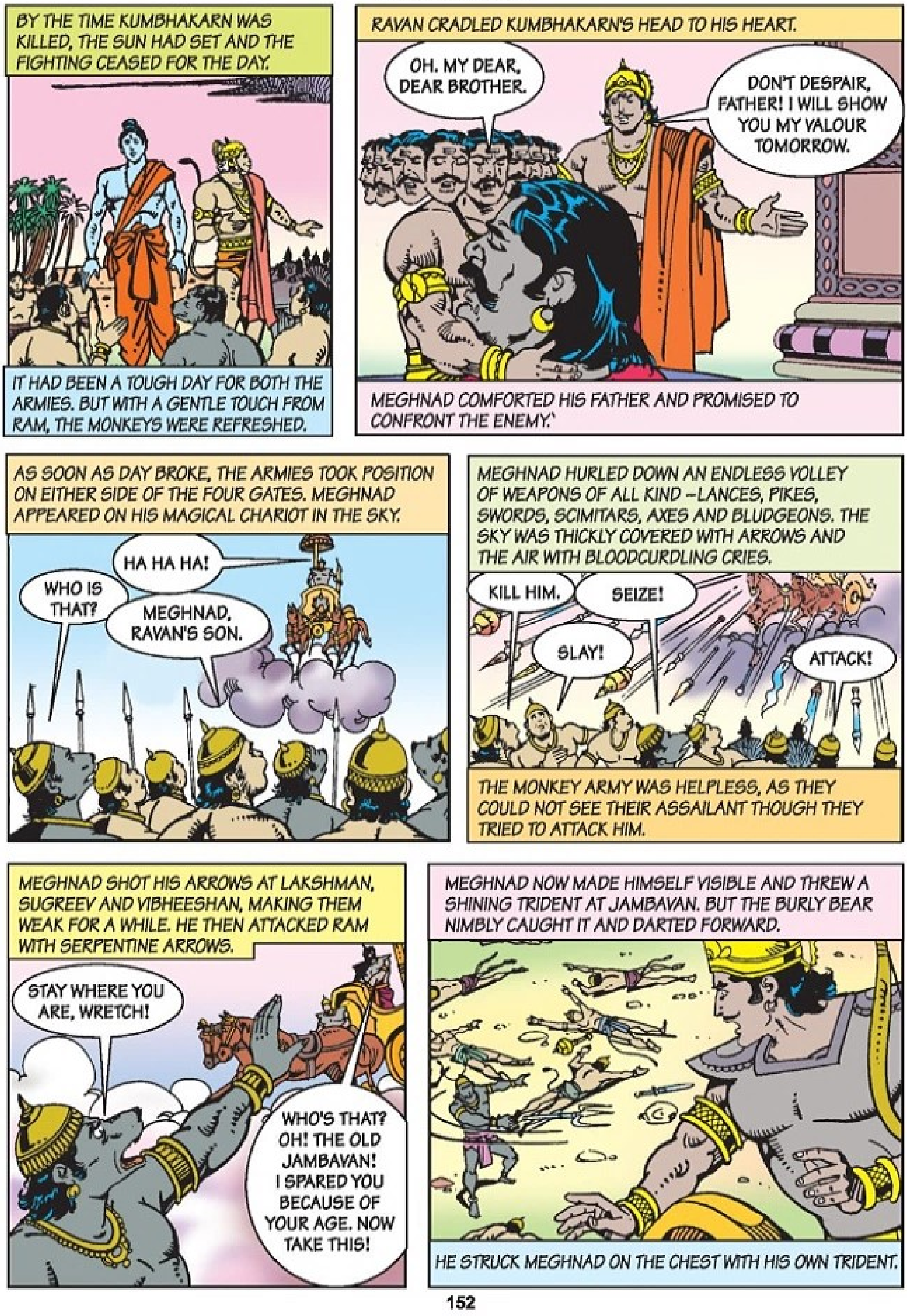

BHARAT WAS FILLED WITH SORROW AND HIS EYES BRIMMED OVER WITH TEARS.
OH, NO! WHAT HAVE I DONE?
IF IN THOUGHT, WORD AND ACTION, I AM SINCERELY DEVOTED TO RAM AND IF HE REALLY CARES FOR ME TOO, MAY THIS MONKEY BE RELIEVED OF ALL HIS PAIN.
AT ONCE, HANUMAN AROSE AND SAT UP, HALE AND HEARTY.
GLORY! ALL GLORY TO THE LORD OF KOSALA.
OH! TELL ME, IS ALL WELL WITH RAM AND LAKSHMAN?
HANUMAN TOLD HIM BRIEFLY ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED. BHARAT WAS UNHAPPY TO HEAR THE TALE, BUT REALISED TIME WAS OF ESSENCE.
YOU MUST GO AS SWIFTLY AS YOU CAN! MOUNT ON MY ARROW WITH YOUR MOUNTAIN AND I WILL SEND YOU THERE FASTER.
IS THAT POSSIBLE? PERHAPS WITH FAITH, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.
MEANWHILE RAM WAS WORRIED AND ANXIOUS.
HALF THE NIGHT HAS PASSED BUT HANUMAN IS NOT HERE YET! MY DEAR LAKSHMAN IS SO STILL AND SILENT.
HE RAISED LAKSHMAN'S SUPINE FORM AND CLASPED HIM TO HIS BOSOM.
DEAR ONE, YOU COULD NEVER SEE ME UNHAPPY! WHY DON'T YOU GET UP NOW? OH, IF I KNEW I WOULD LOSE YOU, I WOULD NEVER HAVE AGREED TO FATHER'S COMMAND!
OH, HOW SAD HE IS.
HOPE HANUMAN COMES SOON.
RAM'S FRANTIC WAILS WERE ECHOED BY THE CRIES OF THE MONKEYS AROUND.
THE AIR OF PATHOS WAS SUDDENLY LIFTED WHEN HANUMAN APPEARED ON THE HORIZON.
HE HAS THE HERB!
HURRAY! HE'S HERE!
NO! NO! HE HAS A HUGE HULK OF A HILL ON HIS HEAD.
RAM WELCOMED HANUMAN WITH A WARM EMBRACE. MEANWHILE, SUSHEN SEARCHED FOR THE RIGHT HERB.


AS SOON AS HE WAS TREATED WITH THE HIMALAYAN HERB BROUGHT BY HANUMAN, LAKSHMAN SAT UP.
OH! HOW GOOD IT IS TO HEAR YOUR VOICE!
WHAT HAPPENED?
HURRAY!
HE'S ALL RIGHT.
HANUMAN'S WORK WAS NOT OVER YET.
THANK YOU, SUSHEN. NOW I MUST TAKE YOU HOME.
WELL, YOU HAVE TO TAKE ME AND MY HOME BACK WHERE WE BELONG.
RAVAN RECEIVED DETAILED REPORTS OF ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED DURING THE NIGHT.
HE REALISED IT WAS TIME TO ROUSE HIS COLOSSAL BROTHER KUMBHAKARN.
WAKE UP KUMBHAKARN. WE NEED HIM NOW!
WAKE HIM NOW? YOU KNOW HE SLEEPS FOR SIX MONTHS AT A TIME.
BLOW TRUMPETS IN HIS EAR, POUR WATER ON HIS BODY... DO ANYTHING, BUT GET HIM UP!
AFTER A LOT OF ATTEMPTS, KUMBHAKARN WOKE UP, LOOKING LIKE DEATH INCARNATE.
WHAT IS WRONG, BROTHER? WHY IS YOUR FACE WITHERED?
OH! YOU SLEPT THROUGH IT ALL! LET ME TELL YOU.
RAVAN NARRATED ALL THE EVENTS THAT LED TO THE PRESENT PREDICAMENT.
KUMBHAKARN HEARD THE WHOLE STORY PATIENTLY.
SO, YOU BROUGHT SITA HERE AND NOW RAM WITH THE MONKEY ARMY IS HERE TO FETCH HER BACK! BUT WHY DO YOU WORRY?
KUMBHAKARN KNEW THAT RAVAN HAD SEVERAL STALWARTS IN HIS DEMON ARMY.
DEVANTAK?
KILLED!
ATIKAY?
SLAIN!
AKAMPAN?
CRUSHED!
MAHODAR?
MURDERED!
KUMBHAKARN.
RAVAN.


WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF SO MANY STALWARTS, THE SLEEPY KUMBHAKARN BECAME WIDE AWAKE AND ALERT.
I AM HUNGRY! BROTHER, ARRANGE FOR A HERD OF BUFFALOES AND ABOUT A THOUSAND JARS OF WINE TO GET ME GOING.
AFTER STARTING HIS SNACK, KUMBHAKARN SALLIED FORTH ALONE.
VIBHEESHAN SAW HIM COMING AND BOWED TO HIM.
O, BROTHER! I GAVE SOME GOOD ADVICE TO RAVAN AND HE KICKED ME OUT! THAT'S WHY I CAME TO RAM FOR REFUGE.
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING! RAVAN'S FATE IS SEALED. BLESS YOU! BUT NOW GO, FOR I NO LONGER KNOW FRIEND OR FOE.
VIBHEESHAN ANNOUNCED TO RAM —
HERE COMES KUMBHAKARN, AS LARGE AS A MOUNTAIN.
HIT HIM!
ENEMY!
THROW TREES ON HIM!
CHATTERING AND SNARLING, THE ARMY BEGAN TO ATTACK KUMBHAKARN WITH TREES AND ROCKS AS MISSILES.
BUT ALL THEIR EFFORTS WERE IN VAIN FOR THE HARDEST OF ROCKS AND THE LARGEST OF TREES DID NOT DETER HIM.
HE'S NOT EVEN STIRRING.
IT'S LIKE THROWING A FLOWER AT AN ELEPHANT.
HMM! TIME FOR SOME ACTION.
HANUMAN JUMPED INTO THE FRAY…
…AND GAVE HIM A BIG BLOW WITH HIS CLENCHED FIST AND FELLED HIM.
WHAM
BUT KUMBHAKARN SOON GOT UP AND HIT HANUMAN SO HARD THAT HE SPUN LIKE A TOP AND DROPPED DOWN TO THE GROUND.
NEXT, NAL AND NEEL WERE HIS VICTIMS.
LOOK! HE'S THROWN NAL.
AND NEEL TOO.
TIME TO RUN!
KUMBHAKARN HIT AS MANY MONKEYS AS HE FOUND. THEN, AFTER KNOCKING ANGAD UNCONSCIOUS, HE TUCKED SUGREEV UNDER HIS ARM AND TOOK OFF.


SUGREEV LAY IN A FAINT TUCKED UNDER KUMBHAKARN'S ARM FOR A WHILE. BUT WHEN HE CAME TO, HE STRUGGLED OUT AND BIT OFF HIS CAPTOR'S NOSE AND EARS.
THEN HE JUMPED UP IN THE AIR.
BUT KUMBHAKARN CAUGHT HOLD OF HIS FOOT AND DASHED HIM TO THE GROUND.
SWOOSH
TWANG
THUMP
SUGREEV, HOWEVER, ESCAPED WITH GREAT AGILITY AND RETURNED TO THE CAMP.
WITH HIS NOSE AND EARS BLEEDING PROFUSELY AND HIS EYES BLOODSHOT WITH RAGE, KUMBHAKARN LOOKED LIKE TERROR INCARNATE AS HE RUSHED TOWARDS THE MONKEY ARMY.
MADDENED WITH BATTLE RAGE, HE SEIZED SOME MONKEYS AND GOBBLED THEM UP. HE CRUSHED THOUSANDS BETWEEN HIS PALMS AND HUNDREDS WERE CRUSHED UNDER HIS FEET.
MYRIAD MONKEYS AND HUNDREDS OF BEARS THAT HE HAD SWALLOWED WHOLE, TRIED TO ESCAPE FROM HIS GAPING MOUTH AND CAVERNOUS NOSE AND EAR HOLES.
COME ON! KUMBHAKARN HAS OVERPOWERED THE MONKEYS! LET'S KILL THEM COMPLETELY.
VICTORY TO KUMBHAKARN!
VICTORY TO RAVAN!
BEHIND KUMBHAKARN THERE NOW WERE ENDLESS ROWS OF DEMON SOLDIERS.
RAM TOOK CHARGE.
SUGREEV, VIBHEESHAN, LAKSHMAN! YOU COMMAND THE ARMY! I'LL DEAL WITH THE DEMONS!
RAM TWANGED HIS BOW IN WARNING.
TWANG
WHAT WAS THAT DEAFENING SOUND?
WHAT? I CAN'T HEAR YOU IN THIS DIN!
A HUNDRED THOUSAND ARROWS FLEW IN ALL DIRECTIONS.


RAM'S UNFAILING ARROWS FOUND THEIR MARK. THE DEMON SOLDIERS WERE DECIMATED.
LEAVING THE FIELD A FEARSOME SIGHT OF FLYING LIMBS AND HEADS, THE ARROWS ALL RETURNED TO RAM'S QUIVER.
NOW KUMBHAKARN LURCHED TOWARDS RAM LIKE A BLACK MOUNTAIN.
RAM'S ARROWS FLEW THROUGH HIS BODY AND EMERGED LIKE LIGHTNING FROM A BLACK CLOUD.
THE MONKEY ARMY BEGGED RAM TO PROTECT THEM FROM KUMBHAKARN, WHO WAS APPROACHING WITH A LARGE MOUNTAIN IN HIS RIGHT HAND.
HELP US!
HE WILL DESTROY OUR RACE.
WITH A WELL-AIMED ARROW, RAM LOPPED OFF HIS RIGHT HAND.
KUMBHAKARN PICKED UP THE HUGE WEAPON IN HIS LEFT HAND AND RUSHED AT RAM.
AHHHH!
THUD
SWISH
BUT HIS LEFT ARM TOO WAS SLICED OFF.
WITH A BLOODCURDLING YELL,THE INJURED GIANT RAN AS IF HE WOULD SWALLOW THE WORLD IN HIS HUGE MOUTH.
RAM DREW HIS BOWSTRING RIGHT UP TO HIS EAR AND FILLED THE DEMON'S MOUTH WITH HUNDREDS OF ARROWS.
LOOKING LIKE A LIVING QUIVER, THE GIANT RAN ON, UNABATED. RAM TOOK A SHARP ARROW...
...AND CUT OFF HIS HEAD IN A SINGLE SWIFT MOVE. HIS HEAD FLEW OFF AND FELL AT RAVAN'S FEET AND THE EARTH SANK BENEATH THE HULK OF HIS TRUNK.

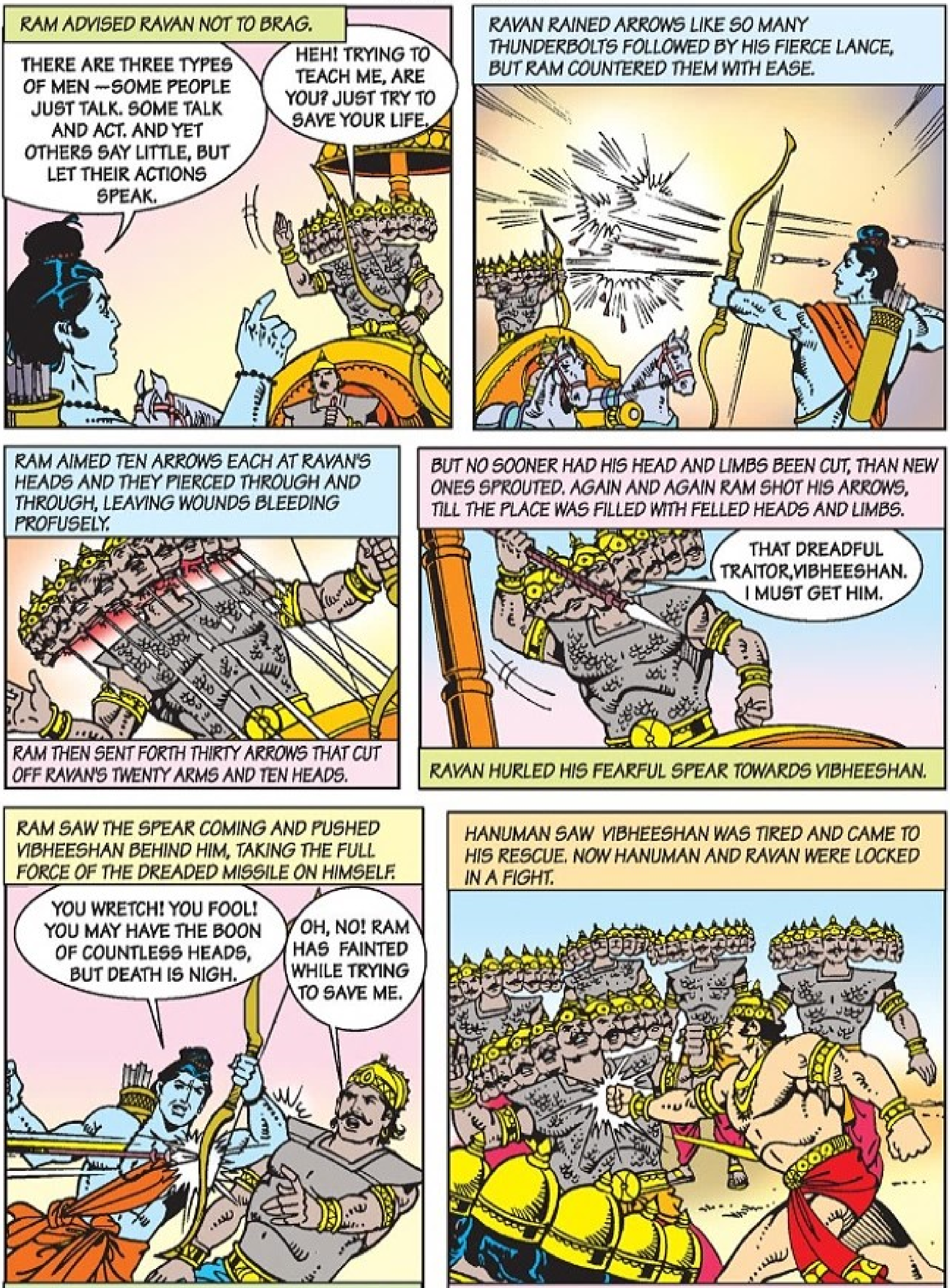

BY THE TIME KUMBHAKARN WAS KILLED, THE SUN HAD SET AND THE FIGHTING CEASED FOR THE DAY.
IT HAD BEEN A TOUGH DAY FOR BOTH THE ARMIES. BUT WITH A GENTLE TOUCH FROM RAM, THE MONKEYS WERE REFRESHED.
RAVAN CRADLED KUMBHAKARN'S HEAD TO HIS HEART.
OH. MY DEAR, DEAR BROTHER.
DON'T DESPAIR, FATHER! I WILL SHOW YOU MY VALOUR TOMORROW.
MEGHNAD COMFORTED HIS FATHER AND PROMISED TO CONFRONT THE ENEMY.`
AS SOON AS DAY BROKE, THE ARMIES TOOK POSITION ON EITHER SIDE OF THE FOUR GATES. MEGHNAD APPEARED ON HIS MAGICAL CHARIOT IN THE SKY.
HA HA HA!
WHO IS THAT?
MEGHNAD, RAVAN'S SON.
MEGHNAD HURLED DOWN AN ENDLESS VOLLEY OF WEAPONS OF ALL KIND –LANCES, PIKES, SWORDS, SCIMITARS, AXES AND BLUDGEONS. THE SKY WAS THICKLY COVERED WITH ARROWS AND THE AIR WITH BLOODCURDLING CRIES.
KILL HIM.
SEIZE!
SLAY!
ATTACK!
THE MONKEY ARMY WAS HELPLESS, AS THEY COULD NOT SEE THEIR ASSAILANT THOUGH THEY TRIED TO ATTACK HIM.
MEGHNAD SHOT HIS ARROWS AT LAKSHMAN, SUGREEV AND VIBHEESHAN, MAKING THEM WEAK FOR A WHILE. HE THEN ATTACKED RAM WITH SERPENTINE ARROWS.
STAY WHERE YOU ARE, WRETCH!
WHO'S THAT? OH! THE OLD JAMBAVAN! I SPARED YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR AGE. NOW TAKE THIS!
MEGHNAD NOW MADE HIMSELF VISIBLE AND THREW A SHINING TRIDENT AT JAMBAVAN. BUT THE BURLY BEAR NIMBLY CAUGHT IT AND DARTED FORWARD.
HE STRUCK MEGHNAD ON THE CHEST WITH HIS OWN TRIDENT.

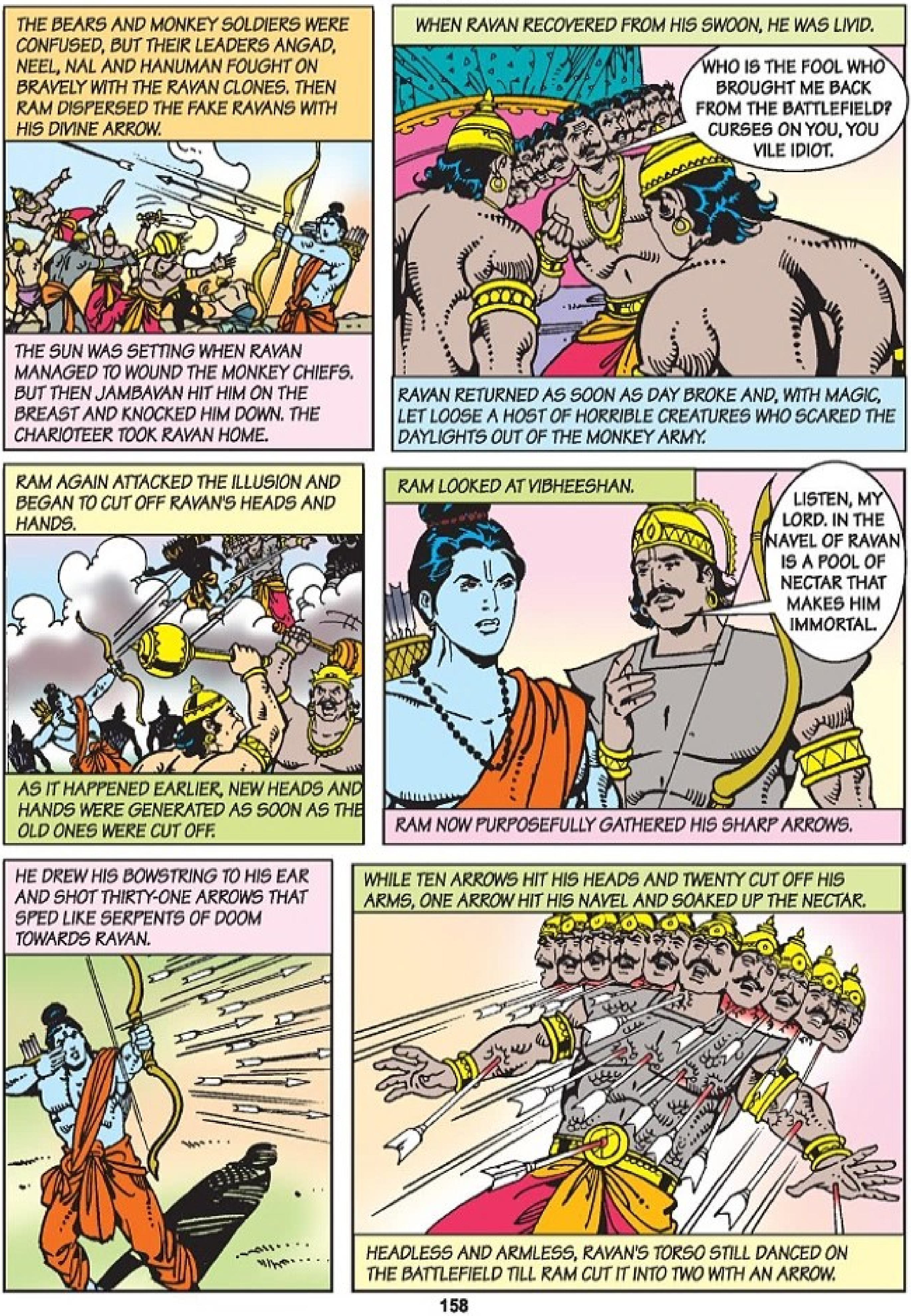

MEGHNAD WAS WOUNDED BUT NOT DEAD, OWING TO A BOON GRANTED TO HIM. SO, JAMBAVAN SEIZED HIM BY THE FOOT…
…AND FLUNG HIM INTO LANKA. MEANWHILE, THE DIVINE GARUD ARRIVED AND FREED RAM FROM THE SNAKES THAT ENCIRCLED HIM.
MEGHNAD FELL IN A FAINT AT RAVAN'S FEET, FEELING QUITE HUMILIATED.
I WILL RETIRE TO A QUIET CAVE AND PERFORM A SACRIFICE TO MAKE MYSELF INVINCIBLE. ONLY THEN WILL I RETURN.
VIBHEESHAN, IN RAM'S CAMP, REALISED THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DECISION.
MEGHNAD IS A TERRIBLE SORCERER, AND IF HE IS ALLOWED TO COMPLETE THIS RITUAL, HE WILL BECOME INVINCIBLE. WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO WIN OVER THE DEMONS THEN.
I WILL SEND A GROUP OF OUR ARMY TO STOP HIM.
RAM CALLED ANGAD AND OTHER BRAVE WARRIORS TOGETHER.
GO WITH LAKSHMAN AND DESTROY MEGHNAD'S SACRIFICE. YOU CREATE HAVOC, BUT IT WILL BE LAKSHMAN'S TASK TO SLAY HIM.
USE STRENGTH OR STRATEGY, BUT SLAY HIM! JAMBAVAN, SUGREEV AND VIBHEESHAN, TAKE YOUR ARMIES AND SUPPORT LAKSHMAN.
I WILL NOT RETURN WITHOUT KILLING HIM.
LAKSHMAN, WITH HIS QUIVER FULL OF ARROWS AND HEART FULL OF DETERMINATION, ARRIVED AT THE SPOT WHERE MEGHNAD WAS PERFORMING THE RITUAL.
LET'S STOP HIM.
WE WILL PUT OUT THE FIRE.
WE'LL DESTROY ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS.
MEGHNAD WAS OFFERING OBLATIONS OF BLOOD AND LIVE BUFFALOES TO THE FIRE.


THE MONKEYS UPSET THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE, AND BEGAN TO HARASS MEGHNAD.
KICK HIM!
BOX HIS EARS.
BITE HIM!
THEY TORMENTED HIM IN VARIOUS WAYS AND RAN BACK TO LAKSHMAN.
MEGHNAD PICKED UP HIS TRIDENT AND RUSHED AT THEM, HITTING ANGAD AND HANUMAN FAST.
AHH!
AOOO!
HE THEN AIMED AT LAKSHMAN, WHO BROKE THE TRIDENT INTO TWO.
LAKSHMAN THEN SHOT FIERCE ARROWS AT HIM THAT DARTED LIKE LIGHTNING.
MEGHNAD USED HIS MAGICAL POWERS TO MAKE HIMSELF INVISIBLE. THE MONKEY ARMY WAS CONFUSED. NOW THEY SAW HIM, NOW THEY DIDN'T!
ENOUGH OF YOUR GAMES! I'LL GET YOU NOW.
WITH THE NAME OF RAM ON HIS LIPS, LAKSHMAN SHOT AN ARROW WITH SUCH PERFECT AIM THAT IT STRUCK MEGHNAD IN THE BREAST.
AHHHH!
HE FELL LIFELESS TO THE GROUND.
HANUMAN PICKED UP MEGHNAD'S LIMP BODY AND LEFT IT AT THE GATE OF LANKA. THE NEWS OF HIS DEATH REACHED RAVAN'S PALACE.
MEGHNAD HAS BEEN KILLED BY LAKSHMAN.
OH, NO!

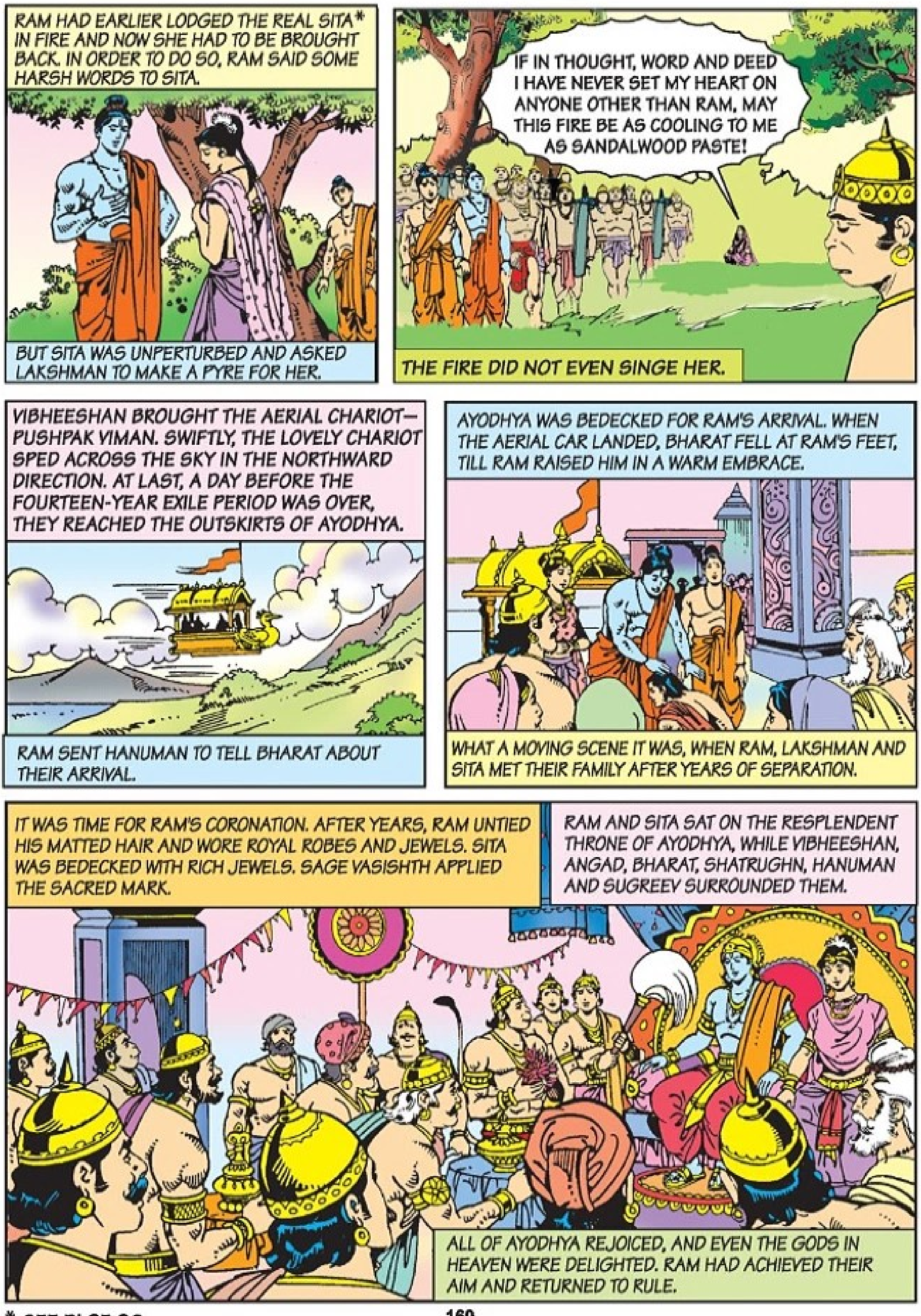

RAVAN COULD NOT BEAR TO HEAR THE NEWS AND FELL IN A SWOON.
MANDODARI BEAT HER CHEST AND WAILED AS DID THE OTHER WOMEN OF THE ROYAL HOUSE HOLD.
NEXT MORNING, HOWEVER, RAVAN WAS READY TO LEAD HIS FORCES WITH THE FOURFOLD ARMY OF FOOT SOLDIERS, CHARIOTS, ELEPHANTS AND HORSES.
LISTEN, MY VALIANT WARRIORS! CRUSH ALL THE MONKEYS AND BEARS! LEAVE THE TWO PRINCE BROTHERS TO ME. NOW FORWARD MARCH!
THE MONKEY ARMY WAS ALSO FILLED WITH A PASSION FOR FIGHTING.
THE TWO ARMIES MET HEADLONG. THEY CLUTCHED, THEY HACKED, THEY HURLED, THEY FLUNG, THEY SMASHED SKULLS AND PLUCKED LIMBS.
RAVAN RODE AHEAD, UNPERTURBED BY ANY WEAPON THROWN AT HIM, CRUSHING THE MONKEYS AND BEARS IN HIS WAY. THEN, LAKSHMAN CONFRONTED RAVAN.
YOU WRETCH! LEAVE THE MONKEYS ALONE! LOOK AT ME, FOR I AM YOUR DOOM!
RAVAN THREW MYRIAD MISSILES AT LAKSHMAN, BUT HE REDUCED THEM TO SMITHEREENS AS SMALL AS SESAME SEEDS.
LAKSHMAN THEN SHATTERED RAVAN'S CHARIOT AND SLEW HIS CHARIOTEER AND ATTACKED RAVAN'S TEN HEADS WITH HUNDREDS OF ARROWS. RAVAN NOW USED THE FIERCE SPEAR OF BRAHMA.
SWISH
LAKSHMAN FELL IN A SWOON.
HANUMAN SAW LAKSHMAN FALL AND HE HIT RAVAN WITH HIS FIST. HE FELL LIKE A MOUNTAIN HIT BY A THUNDERBOLT.
HANUMAN CARRIED LAKSHMAN TO RAM WHO SPOKE SOOTHING, ENCOURAGING WORDS TO HIM.


RAM'S WORDS REVIVED LAKSHMAN AND HE ROSE UP WITH RENEWED VIGOUR. HE ATTACKED RAVAN AGAIN AND DESTROYED HIS CHARIOT AND PIERCED HIS HEART WITH SEVERAL ARROWS.
RAVAN FELL IN A FAINT AND WAS CARRIED AWAY ON ANOTHER CHARIOT.
IN THE PALACE, WHEN RAVAN RECOVERED, HE SET ABOUT TO PERFORM A SACRIFICE.
ONCE AGAIN, VIBHEESHAN LEARNT ABOUT IT, WARNED RAM, AND BEGGED HIM TO PUT A STOP TO IT.
RAM SENT HIS WARRIORS TO WRECK THE SACRIFICE.
MAKE SURE HE STOPS THE RITUAL AND RETURNS TO THE BATTLEFIELD.
WE WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM.
WE WILL STOP THE WRETCH.
THE MONKEY ARMY APPROACHED RAVAN AS HE SAT IN MEDITATION AND BEGAN TO TORMENT HIM BY BITING, KICKING AND HITTING HIM TILL HE RETURNED TO THE FIELD.
THE BATTLE CONTINUED IN FULL FORCE. WHEN RAVAN SAW HIS FORCES DIMINISHING, HE DECIDED TO USE HIS MAGICAL POWERS.
WHAT'S THIS?
THERE ARE RAM AND LAKSHMAN IN THE DEMON ARMY!
NOT ONE! NOT TWO! BUT HUNDREDS!
RAM SMILED AND DISSIPATED THE ILLUSION WITH A SINGLE ARROW.
HE CALMED THE CONFUSED ARMY AND REASSURED THEM.
MY HEROES, YOU ARE ALL TIRED. REST AWHILE, WHILE I FIGHT A DUEL WITH RAVAN.
WHEN RAM APPROACHED HIM, RAVAN BELLOWED IN A THUNDERING VOICE.
LISTEN, YOU ASCETIC! I'M NOT LIKE THE OTHERS YOU OVERPOWERED! YOU MAY HAVE KILLED KHAR, DUSHAN, MEGHNAD AND KUMBHAKARN. BUT TODAY YOU ARE DEALING WITH THE RELENTLESS RAVAN!
DON'T CHATTER! SHOW ME YOUR PROWESS.


RAM ADVISED RAVAN NOT TO BRAG.
THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF MEN —SOME PEOPLE JUST TALK. SOME TALK AND ACT. AND YET OTHERS SAY LITTLE, BUT LET THEIR ACTIONS SPEAK.
HEH! TRYING TO TEACH ME, ARE YOU? JUST TRY TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.
RAVAN RAINED ARROWS LIKE SO MANY THUNDERBOLTS FOLLOWED BY HIS FIERCE LANCE, BUT RAM COUNTERED THEM WITH EASE.
RAM AIMED TEN ARROWS EACH AT RAVAN'S HEADS AND THEY PIERCED THROUGH AND THROUGH, LEAVING WOUNDS BLEEDING PROFUSELY.
RAM THEN SENT FORTH THIRTY ARROWS THAT CUT OFF RAVAN'S TWENTY ARMS AND TEN HEADS.
BUT NO SOONER HAD HIS HEAD AND LIMBS BEEN CUT, THAN NEW ONES SPROUTED. AGAIN AND AGAIN RAM SHOT HIS ARROWS, TILL THE PLACE WAS FILLED WITH FELLED HEADS AND LIMBS.
THAT DREADFUL TRAITOR,VIBHEESHAN. I MUST GET HIM.
RAVAN HURLED HIS FEARFUL SPEAR TOWARDS VIBHEESHAN.
RAM SAW THE SPEAR COMING AND PUSHED VIBHEESHAN BEHIND HIM, TAKING THE FULL FORCE OF THE DREADED MISSILE ON HIMSELF.
YOU WRETCH! YOU FOOL! YOU MAY HAVE THE BOON OF COUNTLESS HEADS, BUT DEATH IS NIGH.
OH, NO! RAM HAS FAINTED WHILE TRYING TO SAVE ME.
VIBHEESHAN HIT RAVAN ON THE CHEST WITH A HEAVY MACE, FELLING HIM TO THE GROUND.
HANUMAN SAW VIBHEESHAN WAS TIRED AND CAME TO HIS RESCUE. NOW HANUMAN AND RAVAN WERE LOCKED IN A FIGHT.
RAVAN USED HIS MAGICAL POWERS AGAIN SO THAT THOUSANDS OF RAVAN LOOK-ALIKES APPEARED AT ONCE.


THE BEARS AND MONKEY SOLDIERS WERE CONFUSED, BUT THEIR LEADERS ANGAD, NEEL, NAL AND HANUMAN FOUGHT ON BRAVELY WITH THE RAVAN CLONES. THEN RAM DISPERSED THE FAKE RAVANS WITH HIS DIVINE ARROW.
THE SUN WAS SETTING WHEN RAVAN MANAGED TO WOUND THE MONKEY CHIEFS. BUT THEN JAMBAVAN HIT HIM ON THE BREAST AND KNOCKED HIM DOWN. THE CHARIOTEER TOOK RAVAN HOME.
WHEN RAVAN RECOVERED FROM HIS SWOON, HE WAS LIVID.
WHO IS THE FOOL WHO BROUGHT ME BACK FROM THE BATTLEFIELD? CURSES ON YOU, YOU VILE IDIOT.
RAVAN RETURNED AS SOON AS DAY BROKE AND, WITH MAGIC, LET LOOSE A HOST OF HORRIBLE CREATURES WHO SCARED THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF THE MONKEY ARMY.
RAM AGAIN ATTACKED THE ILLUSION AND BEGAN TO CUT OFF RAVAN'S HEADS AND HANDS.
AS IT HAPPENED EARLIER, NEW HEADS AND HANDS WERE GENERATED AS SOON AS THE OLD ONES WERE CUT OFF.
RAM LOOKED AT VIBHEESHAN.
LISTEN, MY LORD. IN THE NAVEL OF RAVAN IS A POOL OF NECTAR THAT MAKES HIM IMMORTAL.
RAM NOW PURPOSEFULLY GATHERED HIS SHARP ARROWS.
HE DREW HIS BOWSTRING TO HIS EAR AND SHOT THIRTY-ONE ARROWS THAT SPED LIKE SERPENTS OF DOOM TOWARDS RAVAN.
WHILE TEN ARROWS HIT HIS HEADS AND TWENTY CUT OFF HIS ARMS, ONE ARROW HIT HIS NAVEL AND SOAKED UP THE NECTAR.
HEADLESS AND ARMLESS, RAVAN'S TORSO STILL DANCED ON THE BATTLEFIELD TILL RAM CUT IT INTO TWO WITH AN ARROW.


THE EARTH SHOOK AS RAVAN FELL TO THE GROUND.
VICTORY TO RAM!
VICTORY TO RAGHUVIR!
RAVAN'S QUEENS INCLUDING MANDODARI RUSHED TO THE SPOT. VIBHEESHAN CONSOLED THEM.
THEN, AS INSTRUCTED BY RAM, VIBHEESHAN AND RAVAN'S WIVES PERFORMED THE LAST RITES OF RAVAN, OFFERING HANDFULS OF WATER AND SESAME SEEDS.
AFTER THE FUNERARY RITES WERE OVER, RAM CALLED NEEL, NAL, JAMBAVAN AND ANGAD.
I CANNOT ENTER THE CITY. BUT I WANT YOU TO GO WITH LAKSHMAN AND ARRANGE FOR THE CORONATION OF VIBHEESHAN AS THE KING OF LANKA.
RAM THEN POURED FULSOME PRAISE ON HIS FORCES FOR THE WAR THEY HAD WAGED FOR HIM.
RAM SENT HANUMAN TO GIVE THE GOOD NEWS TO SITA IN LANKA AND ASK ABOUT HER WELFARE.
RAM HAS KILLED RAVAN IN BATTLE AND VIBHEESHAN IS THE KING OF LANKA.
OH! YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME SUCH GOOD NEWS, HANUMAN! BLESS YOU.
WHEN HANUMAN BROUGHT NEWS OF SITA'S WELL-BEING, RAM SENT ANGAD AND VIBHEESHAN TO FETCH SITA.
MEANWHILE, ON VIBHEESHAN'S ORDERS, THE DEMONESSES HAD DECKED SITA UP IN RESPLENDENT GARMENTS AND JEWELS.
SEATED IN A CHARIOT, SITA WAS TAKEN TO RAM, WITH SENTRIES GUARDING HER ON ALL SIDES.
THE BEARS AND MONKEYS RAN TO GET A GLIMPSE OF HER, BUT WERE KEPT BACK BY THE VIGILANT GUARDS.
CAN'T SEE HER!
O H H! I JUST WANT A GLIMPSE!
S H O O O!
RAM ORDERED SITA TO BE BROUGHT ON FOOT SO THAT THE ARMY COULD SEE HER.


RAM HAD EARLIER LODGED THE REAL SITA* IN FIRE AND NOW SHE HAD TO BE BROUGHT BACK. IN ORDER TO DO SO, RAM SAID SOME HARSH WORDS TO SITA.
BUT SITA WAS UNPERTURBED AND ASKED LAKSHMAN TO MAKE A PYRE FOR HER.
IF IN THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED I HAVE NEVER SET MY HEART ON ANYONE OTHER THAN RAM, MAY THIS FIRE BE AS COOLING TO ME AS SANDALWOOD PASTE!
THE FIRE DID NOT EVEN SINGE HER.
VIBHEESHAN BROUGHT THE AERIAL CHARIOT—PUSHPAK VIMAN. SWIFTLY, THE LOVELY CHARIOT SPED ACROSS THE SKY IN THE NORTHWARD DIRECTION. AT LAST, A DAY BEFORE THE FOURTEEN-YEAR EXILE PERIOD WAS OVER, THEY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF AYODHYA.
RAM SENT HANUMAN TO TELL BHARAT ABOUT THEIR ARRIVAL.
AYODHYA WAS BEDECKED FOR RAM'S ARRIVAL. WHEN THE AERIAL CAR LANDED, BHARAT FELL AT RAM'S FEET, TILL RAM RAISED HIM IN A WARM EMBRACE.
WHAT A MOVING SCENE IT WAS, WHEN RAM, LAKSHMAN AND SITA MET THEIR FAMILY AFTER YEARS OF SEPARATION.
IT WAS TIME FOR RAM'S CORONATION. AFTER YEARS, RAM UNTIED HIS MATTED HAIR AND WORE ROYAL ROBES AND JEWELS. SITA WAS BEDECKED WITH RICH JEWELS. SAGE VASISHTH APPLIED THE SACRED MARK.
RAM AND SITA SAT ON THE RESPLENDENT THRONE OF AYODHYA, WHILE VIBHEESHAN, ANGAD, BHARAT, SHATRUGHN, HANUMAN AND SUGREEV SURROUNDED THEM.
ALL OF AYODHYA REJOICED, AND EVEN THE GODS IN HEAVEN WERE DELIGHTED. RAM HAD ACHIEVED THEIR AIM AND RETURNED TO RULE.

* SEE PAGE 80

TULSIDAS' RAMAYANA

Tulsidas (1532 – 1623 AD) poet and philosopher, told the story of Ram, prince of Ayodhya, in Avadhi, a dialect of Hindi spoken in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. Ram Charit Manas consists of over a thousand stanzas, each about 10 to 18 lines. Over the years it has been dramatised and performed by numerous theatre troupes. The dramatisation is known as Ramlila and has become an integral part of Dassera celebrations, especially in the regions that speak Hindi.

By telling the story of Ram in a common language, Tulsidas made the Ramayan, which was written originally in Sanskrit, accessible to the masses.

This Amar Chitra Katha Special Issue brings together the Ram Charit Manas in five sections – The Childhood Days of Ram, Ram in Exile, The Abduction of Sita, The Search for Sita and Ram the Victorious.